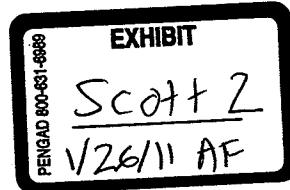


## **EXHIBIT B**

## 2003 TRIBUNE ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

<p><b>Name:</b> Scott,Karen M</p> <p><b>Title:</b> Dir, News</p> <p><b>Group:</b> Broadcasting</p> <p><b>Company:</b> WPIX-TV</p> <p><b>Date of Hire:</b> 05-10-1993</p> <p><b>Time in Position:</b></p> <p><b>Review Date:</b> 08-26-2003</p> <p><b>By:</b> Berlamin, Betty Ellen</p>	<p><b>Education:</b> Ohio State University BA 1971</p> <p><b>Career History:</b></p> <p>Asst Director, News, WPIX-TV 1994-1996</p> <p>Exec Producer, News, WPIX-TV 1993-2007</p> <p>Producer, News, WNBC-TV, New York 1983-1993</p> <p>Exec Producer, News, WFSB, Hartford 1979-1983</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I. Key Success Factors</b></p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">1.) Key Development Need   2.) Needs Additional Development For Current Job   3.) Appropriate For Current Job   4.) Strength   5.) Key Strength</p>		
<p><b>Business Acumen:</b> <span style="float: right;">4</span>  Karen has a strong sense of news judgement and has earned a very good reputation within the community. She has effectively developed into a more strategic thinker and been able to make difficult decisions in order to enhance our product. She also knows how to balance financial considerations with creative decisions. Karen has been working on a more formal approach to progressive discipline and I'd like to see her continue her developmental progress in this area.</p>		
<p><b>Customer Orientation:</b> <span style="float: right;">4</span>  Karen is focused on producing a quality product that we can be proud of. She has been flexible in her reaction to a changing marketplace by broadening the appeal of our newscast with new segments and new talent. She has also formed a strong bond with Newsday that has brought a new dimension to our product. I would like to see her continue the progress we started with Newsday as the company introduces new technology that will make co-ventures easier to manage. Karen has shown an increased understanding of the needs of her peers and should continue to understand all working aspects of the station so that she can further develop her internal (department head) relationships.</p>		
<p><b>Innovation:</b> <span style="float: right;">4</span>  Karen has shown tremendous flexibility in this area. She has recognized the changing landscape of news and reacted accordingly. Though her roots are still in traditional news approaches, she is open to new ideas. She should continue this open-minded approach and nurture her creative thinking. Karen has embraced the partnership with Newsday and needs to continue developing that relationship.</p>		
<p><b>Leadership:</b> <span style="float: right;">5</span>  Karen provides an excellent example of professionalism and integrity. Her sense of fairness has instilled a sense of respect and loyalty within her department. There is a true sense of teamwork and support in her department. She is also good at communicating the company's goals within the department.</p>		
<p><b>Results Orientation:</b> <span style="float: right;">4</span>  Karen works very hard to achieve high performance levels. She sets aggressive goals for herself and her department and doesn't let frustrations become obstacles. Under her leadership, the station has won numerous awards and been recognized for its' commitment to quality broadcasting. Eventhough the ratings have not should the significant growth that we would like, Karen has maintained her positive attitude about never letting down....</p>		

WPIX000470



## Scott,Karen M

<b>II. Principal Strengths/Areas of Expertise</b>		<b>III. Development Needs</b>		
News Judgment Responsive Work Ethic Integrity High performance standards & expectations		Broaden HR skills Multi-media knowledge Develop relationships w/ business units Peer communication		
<b>IV. Development Plans (Assignments/Experiences; Education/Training; Mentors)</b>				
<b>Potential Next Assignments/Responsibilities/Positions</b> (Please indicate if not applicable)				<b>Time Frame</b>
Group news director				Now
<b>Development Activities</b>		<b>Source For Meeting Need</b>	<b>Related To</b>	<b>Est. Completion</b>
Continue project development with Newsday		Howie Schneider Paul Fleishman	Current job	4Q2004
conduct news research analysis		Norm Hecht	Current job	1Q2004
continue working with HR to enhance disciplinary action skills		Jean Maye	N/A	2Q2004
<b>V. Potential Successors</b> (Please indicate if none)		<b>Time Frame</b>		
Houseman,John G Petterson,Lauren		3-5 yrs. TBD		
<b>VI. Willingness To Relocate</b> (Please explain any restrictions)				
N				
<b>VII. Community Organizations and Affiliations; Professional Organizations</b>		<b>Leadership Positions Held</b>		
Nat'l Academy of TV Arts '&' Sci		Board of Governors		
NYS Assoc. Press		Board of Governors		
New York Press Club		Board of Governors		
Oversees Press Club		Board of Governors		
Friars Club		Member		
<b>VIII. Additional Information</b> (Please include additional information such as key initiatives, recent awards/recognition, leadership roles/special projects or assignments)				
Under Karen's leadership this year, the news department has won several awards again. The News At ten won an Emmy, a NY Press Club award, NYS Broadcaster awards and an Edward R. Murrow award. She is a consummate professional who is dedicated to excellence.				

WPIX000471

## 2004 TRIBUNE ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

<p><b>Name:</b> Scott,Karen M</p> <p><b>Title:</b> Dir, News</p> <p><b>Group:</b> Broadcasting</p> <p><b>Company:</b> WPIX-TV</p> <p><b>Date of Hire:</b> 05-10-1993 <b>Time in Position:</b></p> <p><b>Review Date:</b> 10-28-2004</p> <p><b>By:</b> Berlmino,Betty Ellen</p>		<p><b>Education:</b> Ohio State University BA 1971</p> <p><b>Career History:</b> Asst Director, News, WPIX-TV 1994-1996 Exec Producer, News, WPIX-TV 1993-2007 Producer, News, WNBC-TV, New York 1983-1993 Exec Producer, News, WFSB, Hartford 1979-1983</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I. Key Success Factors</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1.) Key Development Need 2.) Needs Additional Development For Current Job 3.) Appropriate For Current Job 4.) Strength 5.) Key Strength</p>		
<p><b>Business Acumen:</b> 4</p> <p>Karen has a strong sense of news judgement and has earned a very good reputation within the community. She has effectively developed into a more strategic thinker and been able to make difficult decisions in order to enhance our product. She also knows how to balance financial considerations with creative decisions. Karen must, however, develop a more formal approach to progressive discipline procedures so that employees are operating at their maximum level. Her department's reviews do not always match the job performances of the individual.</p>		
<p><b>Customer Orientation:</b> 4</p> <p>Karen is focused on producing a quality product that we can be proud of. She has been flexible in her reaction to a changing marketplace by broadening the appeal of our newscast with new segments and new talent. Once we get the results back from our late news study, she must be sure to enlist the help of her management team to make the newscast fit the needs of our viewers. She has been very open to her approach with our print partners and will need to continue to foster that, even in the face of some continuing opposition. Karen needs to broaden her understanding of the needs of her peers and work closer with them to further develop her internal (department head) relationships.</p>		
<p><b>Innovation:</b> 3</p> <p>Karen has shown flexibility in this area. We have tried some new approaches this year to both the morning and evening newscasts; some have worked, and some haven't. She should continue this open-minded approach and nurture her creative thinking. As a station, however, we still need to become more innovative with our approach to our Tribune print partners in addition to some new, potential partnerships. Karen sometimes "protects" people that work for her due to a tremendous sense of loyalty. To truly excel in this area, Karen will have to develop a staff that is able seek opportunities to improve and change the newscasts and therefore increase the ratings and revenue</p>		
<p><b>Leadership:</b> 4</p> <p>Karen provides an excellent example of professionalism and integrity. Her sense of fairness has instilled a sense of respect and loyalty within her department. There is a true sense of teamwork and support in her department. She is also good at communicating the company's goals within the department. She must, however, make sure she is being forthright in her approach to employee evaluations and doesn't fall into the trap of protecting individuals with sub-standard performances.</p>		
<p><b>Results Orientation:</b> 4</p> <p>Karen works very hard to achieve high performance levels. She sets aggressive goals for herself and her department and doesn't let frustrations become obstacles. Under her leadership, the station has won numerous awards and been recognized for its' commitment to quality broadcasting. Eventhough the ratings for the late news have not been where we would like them, Karen has maintained her positive attitude about never letting down...</p>		

WPIX000472

**Scott, Karen M**

<b>II. Principal Strengths/Areas of Expertise</b>		<b>III. Development Needs</b>		
News Judgment		Broaden HR skills		
Responsive		Multi-media knowledge		
Work Ethic		Develop relationships w/ business units		
Integrity		Peer communication		
High performance standards & expectations		Team building		
<b>IV. Development Plans (Assignments/Experiences; Education/Training; Mentors)</b>				
<b>Potential Next Assignments/Responsibilities/Positions (Please indicate if not applicable)</b>			<b>Time Frame</b>	
Broadcasting, Tribune Broadcasting News Ntwk, News - Group news Director			Now	
<b>Development Activities</b>		<b>Source For Meeting Need</b>	<b>Related To</b>	<b>Est. Completion</b>
work with HR to enhance progressive discipline skills		Jean Maye	Current job	1Q2005
enhance working relationship with print partners		Howie Schneider, Russell Pergament	Current job	2Q2006
work with corporate to broaden responsibilities of Tribune Media Net and print partners		Cissy Baker	Potential Next Assignment	4Q2006
<b>V. Potential Successors (Please indicate if none)</b>		<b>Time Frame</b>		
Houseman, John G		3-5 yrs.		
Petterson, Lauren		3-5 yrs.		
<b>VI. Willingness To Relocate (Please explain any restrictions)</b>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	re-location would be difficult, but possibly considered for the right opportunity			
<b>VII. Community Organizations and Affiliations; Professional Organizations</b>		<b>Leadership Positions Held</b>		
Nat'l Academy of TV Arts '&' Sci		Board of Governors		
NYS Assoc. Press		Board of Governors		
New York Press Club		Board of Governors		
Oversees Press Club		Board of Governors		
Friars Club		Member		
<b>VIII. Additional Information (Please include additional information such as key initiatives, recent awards/recognition, leadership roles/special projects or assignments)</b>				
Under Karen's leadership, the news department continues to win numerous awards for excellence. She is a consummate news professional who is dedicated to excellence. She is someone that the company should continue to rely on for further development of our news products.				

WPIX000473

## 2005 TRIBUNE ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

<p><b>Name:</b> Scott,Karen M</p> <p><b>Title:</b> Dir, News</p> <p><b>Group:</b> Broadcasting</p> <p><b>Company:</b> WPIX-TV</p> <p><b>Date of Hire:</b> 05-10-1993</p> <p><b>Time in Position:</b></p> <p><b>Review Date:</b> 10-11-2005</p> <p><b>By:</b> Berlamino,Betty Ellen</p>	<p><b>Education:</b> Ohio State University BA 1971</p> <p><b>Career History:</b> Asst Director, News, WPIX-TV 1994-1996 Exec Producer, News, WPIX-TV 1993-2007 Producer, News, WNBC-TV, New York 1983-1993 Exec Producer, News, WFSB, Hartford 1979-1983</p>	
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## I. Key Success Factors

1.) Key Development Need 2.) Needs Additional Development For Current Job 3.) Appropriate For Current Job 4.) Strength 5.) Key Strength

## Business Acumen:

Karen has a strong sense of news judgement and has earned a very good reputation within the community. While the department has made progress towards strategically growing the product, the progress has been inconsistent. We are still falling back into old patterns even though Karen has been given the research and the guidance for making changes. When pushed, however, Karen does respond, though I'd like her to take more initiative towards implementing change. I also believe that Karen is slow to make personnel changes in the department and needs to do a better job of implementing progressive disciplinary standards and setting the example for her managers. 3

## Customer Orientation:

Karen is focused on producing a quality product that we can be proud of. However, she is still slow to embrace change and react to the changing marketplace. Let's face it, people meters threw us for a loop, but, there are still some fundamental issues that need to be addressed in our product. Karen also needs to foster a warmer relationship with her peers. Whether she believes it or not, everyone here truly does give her their full support yet, she seems to often view them as adversaries. 3

## Innovation:

We have definitely made progress in this area, specifically due to the new set and a new way to present the news. However, our changes need to become more timely and more dramatic because that is the current pace of our business. I think that some of her support staff is resistant to changes and I think that has a negative impact on Karen's ability to be as innovative as I suspect she can be. When she is pushed, Karen is more apt to embrace change. Karen needs to continue to nurture our relationships (yes, take the high road) with our print partners; I know she can break through! And yes, I recognize that's it's not going to be easy and there's resistance on their end. To truly excel in this area, Karen will have to develop a staff that is able to seek opportunities to improve and change the newscasts and therefore increase the ratings and revenue. Karen must be commended this year for the outstanding series of reports from Iraq. It was innovative, unique and deeply moving. I was glad to see that she got recognized with the Values Reward. 3

## Leadership:

Karen provides an excellent example of professionalism and integrity. Her sense of fairness has instilled a sense of respect and loyalty within her department. However, she needs to set an example of support across department's so that her staff will follow her example. The old approach of "what happens down here, stays down here," must be abandoned and she must lead her staff towards a cooperative, one company, we're all in this together, approach. She should also consider altering her hours to gain more exposure to the later shift as well as emphasize her commitment to innovate and change. Additionally, Karen needs to continue to work closely with HR so that we can avoid potential legal issues and remain compliant with the hiring and firing procedures. Better communication would have helped in the Lynne White case. 3

## Results Orientation:

The ratings for both the morning and evening newscasts have gone down dramatically and it has resulted in a negative P&L for news. While both the am and pm are to be congratulated on their Emmys, both shows are inconsistent in their quality and therefore fail to attract a loyal audience on a consistent basis. Karen needs to use progressive discipline and performance feedback more diligently to with all employees, especially talent. Both products need to be improved because they are not attracting a large enough audience to turn a profit. 2

WPIX000474

**Scott,Karen M**

<b>II. Principal Strengths/Areas of Expertise</b>		<b>III. Development Needs</b>		
Community involvement		Change agent		
Commitment		External customer focus		
Time management		Communicate difficult concepts		
Work ethic		Aware of others' perceptions		
Trustworthiness		Team building		
<b>IV. Development Plans (Assignments/Experiences; Education/Training; Mentors)</b>				
<b>Potential Next Assignments/Responsibilities/Positions</b> (Please indicate if not applicable)				<b>Time Frame</b>
Broadcasting, Tribune Broadcasting News Ntwk, News - Group news Director				Now
<b>Development Activities</b>		<b>Source For Meeting Need</b>	<b>Related To</b>	<b>Est. Completion</b>
Foster a better working relationship with engineering to create a "one company" focus		Mike Gano, Jean Maye	Current job	4Q2005
enhance working relationship with print partners		John Mancini, Tim Knight, Russell Pergament	Current job	2Q2006
work with news consultant		Broadcast Image Group	Current job	4Q2006
<b>V. Potential Successors</b> (Please indicate if none)				
				<b>Time Frame</b>
Armstrong,Timothy S				3-5 yrs.
Petterson,Lauren				3-5 yrs.
<b>VI. Willingness To Relocate</b> (Please explain any restrictions)				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y	Karen MIGHT consider re-location for an enhanced opportunity, but it would be difficult.			
<b>VII. Community Organizations and Affiliations; Professional Organizations</b>			<b>Leadership Positions Held</b>	
Nat'l Academy of TV Arts '& Sci			Board of Governors	
NYS Assoc. Press			Board of Governors	
New York Press Club			Board of Governors	
Oversees Press Club			Board of Governors	
Friars Club			Member	
<b>VIII. Additional Information</b> (Please include additional information such as key initiatives, recent awards/recognition, leadership roles/special projects or assignments)				
Karen is a dedicated news professional who truly wants to win and be the best. She has the tenacity and the drive to succeed, but must embrace change and be willing to accept criticism and input to allow the consistency of the product to always be the best. She needs to develop her team so that she has the "bench-strength" to succeed. She has the ability, as evidenced by the most recent Emmys, however, she must now become a change agent, abandon old ideals and set the example for success.				

WPIX000475

## 2006 TRIBUNE ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

<p><b>Name:</b> Scott,Karen M</p> <p><b>Title:</b> Dir, News</p> <p><b>Group:</b> Broadcasting</p> <p><b>Company:</b> WPIX-TV</p> <p><b>Date of Hire:</b> 05-10-1993</p> <p><b>Time in Position:</b></p> <p><b>Review Date:</b> 08-04-2006</p> <p><b>By:</b> Berlamino,Betty Ellen</p>	<p><b>Education:</b> Ohio State University BA 1971</p> <p><b>Career History:</b> Asst Director, News, WPIX-TV 1994-1996 Exec Producer, News, WPIX-TV 1993-2007 Producer, News, WNBC-TV, New York 1983-1993 Exec Producer, News, WFSB, Hartford 1979-1983</p>	
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## I. Key Success Factors

1.) Key Development Need 2.) Needs Additional Development For Current Job 3.) Appropriate For Current Job 4.) Strength 5.) Key Strength

## Business Acumen:

Karen has been very open to change and has worked very hard this year to effect that change. She has embraced the input from our consultant and has made positive changes to the look and feel of both news products. Karen has a strong sense of news judgement and knows how to effectively use all the resources within her reach. Karen has become less adverse to risk and is willing to take chances with the product.much more open to change for making changes. I would like to see Karen continue to embrace the web and lead the charge within the news room to more on-line experimentation. I would also like to see Karen objectively evaluate some of our personnel and move towards making difficult decisions and changes in staff that should either be pushed or replaced. She needs to do a better job of implementing progressive disciplinary standards and setting the example for her managers.

4

## Customer Orientation:

Karen is focused on producing a quality product and understands our external customers more than ever through the help and acceptance of the various research tools that we have used. She has also made great strides in understanding her peers and fostering more teamwork and collaboration. She has effectively mended a strained relationship with Creative Services which has resulted in a higher quality of work.

4

## Innovation:

We have definitely made progress in this area, and need to continue along this path until we win! Karen has been very open to the input from the consultant as well as the input from her peers. She has effectively initiated changes that have improved the quality of our newscasts. I think we are all very happy with the progress of the news department but still need to recognize that it's a work in progress. This includes further experimentation on the web. Karen needs to make sure that all of her direct reports understand our mission and embrace our goals.

4

## Leadership:

Karen provides an excellent example of professionalism and integrity. Her sense of fairness has instilled a sense of respect and loyalty within her department. She has lead by example this year by embracing input from her peers and fostering corroboration amongst multiple departments and it has filtered throughout the entire department. She has earned an elevated level of respect within the station.

4

## Results Orientation:

Both the morning and evening shows have showed improvement this year and they're ready for Karen to lead them to new heights. A new network, a new helicopter and help and support from a respected consultant should improve our ratings and financial results in the upcoming year.

3

WPIX000476

**Scott,Karen M**

<b>II. Principal Strengths/Areas of Expertise</b>		<b>III. Development Needs</b>		
Commitment		Feedback/critique skills		
Resilience		Internet knowledge		
Industry experience		Challenging the status quo		
Credibility		Conceptual thinking		
Time management				
<b>IV. Development Plans (Assignments/Experiences; Education/Training; Mentors)</b>				
<b>Potential Next Assignments/Responsibilities/Positions (Please indicate if not applicable)</b>				<b>Time Frame</b>
Broadcasting, Tribune Broadcasting News Ntwk, News - Group news Director				Now
<b>Development Activities</b>		<b>Source For Meeting Need</b>	<b>Related To</b>	<b>Est. Completion</b>
Work with HR to effectively manage progressive discipline, especially to talent		Jean Maye	Current job	4Q2007
Continue working with news consultant to effect change		Larry Rickle, Broadcast Image Group	N/A	4Q2007
				Ongoing
<b>V. Potential Successors (Please indicate if none)</b>		<b>Time Frame</b>		
Houseman,John G		1-3 yrs.		
Armstrong,Timothy S		3-5 yrs.		
Petterson,Lauren		3-5 yrs.		
<b>VI. Willingness To Relocate (Please explain any restrictions)</b>				
Y				
<b>VII. Community Organizations and Affiliations; Professional Organizations</b>		<b>Leadership Positions Held</b>		
Nat'l Academy of TV Arts & Sci		Board of Governors		
NYS Assoc. Press		Board of Governors		
New York Press Club		Board of Governors		
Oversees Press Club		Board of Governors		
Friars Club		Member		
<b>VIII. Additional Information (Please include additional information such as key initiatives, recent awards/recognition, leadership roles/special projects or assignments)</b>				
Karen has effectively managed the news department through a very difficult time; the introduction of LPM's and the collapse of the network. She has become a much more open-minded leader and has effectively managed change within the department. She needs to continue this quest to win and be the best.				

WPIX000477



WPIX000468

Employee Name	EmpId	Job Title	Co #	Company Name	Annual Rate	Payroll Code	Payroll Code Name	Payroll Amount - YTD	Month	Year
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	239,803	DEU	Dividend Equivalent Unit Lapse	221.84	December	2007
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	239,803	DUL	Div. Equiv. Unit Lapse-no	888.14	December	2007
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	239,803	E4K	Suppl. 401(k) FICA taxable	554.49	December	2007
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	239,803	MIP	Management Incentive Pay	68,000.00	December	2007
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	239,803	REG	Regular	238,862.22	December	2007
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	239,803	RSL	Restricted Stock Unit Lps-no	56,678.00	December	2007
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	239,803	RST	RSU FICA Taxable	30,400.00	December	2007
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	239,803	RSU	Restricted Shares Unit Lapse	10,229.76	December	2007
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	239,803	S4K	Supplemental 401K Distribution	39,164.81	December	2007
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	239,803	TEE	Travel & Entertain (Not Taxed)	956.60	December	2007
						MIP		68,000		

307,803



WPIX000469

Employee Name	Emplid	Job Title	Co #	Company Name	Annual Rate	Payroll Code	Payroll Code Name	Payroll Amount - YTD	Month	Year
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	246,997	MIP	Management Incentive Pay	75,000.00	December	2008
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	246,997	REG	Regular	245,336.42	December	2008
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	246,997	RET	Retroactive Pay	691.74	December	2008
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	246,997	TEE	Travel & Entertain (Not Taxed)	189.83	December	2008
					MIP			75,000		

321,997

Employee Name	Emplid	Job Title	Co #	Company Name	Annual Rate	Payroll Code	Payroll Code Name	Payroll Amount - YTD	Month	Year
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	246,997	MIP	Management Incentive Pay	11,015.27	December	2009
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	246,997	REG	Regular	170,997.66	December	2009
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	246,997	TEE	Travel & Entertain (Not Taxed)	54.77	December	2009
Scott,Karen M	001172	Dir, News	210	WPIX-TV	246,997	VAS	Vacation at Separation	13,299.82	December	2009
					MIP			11,015		

258,012

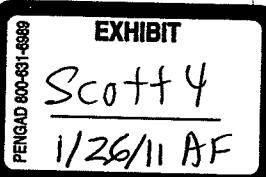


**Berlamino, Betty Ellen**

**From:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 10, 2005 10:46 AM  
**To:** Scott, Karen  
**Subject:** News

For the first time ever, news is projected to operate at a loss in 2005. The current plan projects a net "profit" of -\$327,000. This includes what could be considered some aggressive revenue numbers given our current ratings situation, especially in morning news. Needless to say, if this trend continues, the continuance of the morning show is in jeopardy. I truly think we're on the right track at 10pm and I have seen a very positive influence under Tim's direction. We now seem to be beating UPN9 on a consistent basis and our numbers have been pretty consistent throughout the hour. The morning show, however, is a different story. We have dug ourselves into a hole that is going to be very hard to get out of. We are now in dead last place and are consistently losing to CBS. While I certainly think replacing Lynne with Sukanya will be an upgrade, I don't think it's going to fix our problem. I think the bigger problem is the show itself. I really think it needs an overhaul. We need to get back to the business of delivering the news and highlighting our coverage with some of the lighter features and entertainment segments. Unfortunately I think it's the opposite. Even today, we featured a story about nude karaoke at (approximately) 7:08am. At this hour I think people expect to get real news, traffic and weather, not features about nude karaoke. We also seem to have heavy sexual overtones to many of our pieces, whether it's playboy bunnies as guests, or Larry Hoff parading around with women, his wife or something similar. Since our numbers are at an all-time low, this is obviously not what people want to see. In the A18-49 category, we are -29% from 5-6am, -30% from 6-7am and -33% from 7-9am. In A25-54, we are -14% from 5-6am, -27% from 6-7am and -17% from 7-9am. And, these are LPM's vs. LPM's! So, we are comparing the same methodology; it's not a case of "new currency." You may want to re-think the Larry Hoff position and use that FTE for someone/something that adds to the show. A medical reporter? I think that FOX probably saw the same things with Larry Hoff; that's why they got rid of him. My ultimate question, however, is whether Lauren is the person who can turn the show around and get our numbers back on track. I personally like her a lot. However, I constantly question her ability to fix the show, and, it needs to be fixed or it is in danger of being cancelled; we can't continue to operate at a deficit. Ultimately, Karen, you're responsible for the news, so, I'm asking you to please take a HARD LOOK at what we're doing and make some difficult decisions. Everyone's future is on the line here; I need you to take a leadership role here and get us back on track before it's too late.

I look forward to meeting with you and discussing your plan of action. Please let me know when you're ready to talk; the sooner the better.



1  
 CONFIDENTIAL

WPIX000099



**Berlamino, Betty Ellen**

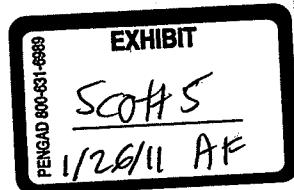
**From:** Scott, Karen  
**Sent:** Monday, May 23, 2005 1:58 PM  
**To:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen; Gano, Mike; Maye, Jean  
**Subject:** RE: meeting- CONFIDENTIAL

THAT'S GOOD..K.

—Original Message—

**From:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
**Sent:** Monday, May 23, 2005 11:14 AM  
**To:** Scott, Karen; Gano, Mike; Maye, Jean  
**Subject:** meeting- CONFIDENTIAL

Please let me know if you are available to meet on Wednesday, right after the staff meeting. We need to discuss Bob Pronovost. His behavior appeared to improve right after the PIP plan was presented but there are apparently issues that continue to surface and we need to deal with them. Here's my issue, I believe that he is having a negative impact on the newscast and I am concerned about the overall performance of the late news. Bottom line: time is running out. If we don't start to see some overall improvement in late news we will need to address very serious changes that will result in job losses and eventually put into question the long-term viability of the product. We continue to lose money in the newscast with no real visible plan of improvement. For whatever reason (skill? personality?), Bob does not garner the support of the staff and we need to look very closely at every negative element that involves.news....so, please be prepared to discuss the situation from a business perspective and be prepared for an open and honest input.....



1  
CONFIDENTIAL

WPIX000110



**Berlamino, Betty Ellen**

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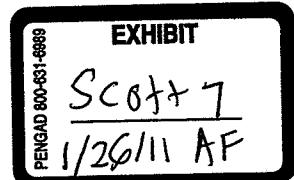
**From:** Scott, Karen  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 21, 2005 1:39 PM  
**To:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
**Subject:** RE: In light of the recent events in the news departments in Philadelphia and San Diego,

Betty Ellen...We can meet tomorrow... what does your schedule look like..we could meet anytime between 11:30 am to 2 pm.. and if it is ok with you... i think wil ocasio needs to be in this meeting... he is a big part of our management team...thanks , karen

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 21, 2005 1:02 PM  
**To:** Scott, Karen  
**Subject:** In light of the recent events in the news departments in Philadelphia and San Diego,

I'd like to schedule a meeting with you, John, Tim and Lauren. As you and I have discussed, our news is actually losing money this year and projected to lose money next year if things don't turn around quickly. Obviously, this is not a position that we can maintain long-term without a serious affect on our overall operations. Therefore, it is imperative that we put on the highest quality product possible with the most skilled people in their respective positions. We can not afford to keep people that contribute to the negative perception and implementation of our product. Needless to say, the appeal of our in-air talent is crucial, as well as those behind the scenes. The producing, directing, and writing are equally, if not even more important that the people delivering the message. Every story has to count, every person has to contribute and we really need to start making a difference in both shows. Quite simply put, we are at a crucial time and our future is depend on "today." Therefore, please let me know when we can all meet and have a candid conversation about the future of our news product.....



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WPIX000148



**Berlamino, Betty Ellen**

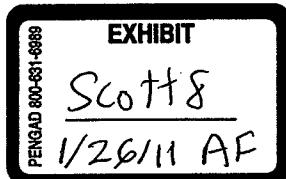
**From:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 20, 2005 3:10 PM  
**To:** Scott, Karen  
**Subject:** News At Ten....

Karen, as we've discussed, I'm deeply concerned about the direction of The News At Ten. I think that John and Tim are taking the, "Does she care?" question in a direction that is not pertinent to TODAY'S WOMAN! I've noticed a severe decline in national and international news and if you look at the research again, THIS IS IMPORTANT TO EVERYONE, both women and men! Women CARE about what's going on in Iraq, they care about what's going on in politics, they care about stocks...they care about EVERYTHING men care about! It's not all about babies, fashion, and health! The women watching our newscasts ALREADY care about news since they're TUNING IN! Many of them work, many of them either help support a family or are the sole providers to their family, they're single, married and divorced! They buy cars, they have investment accounts, they buy houses and they think about their future and the future of their children! For many women that tune-in at 10pm, it's their first look at the days events....whether they were working, dealing with children, and/or doing both!

Karen, ultimately you're the one responsible for the look, the ROI and the ratings of the newscast. And, while I understand that you want to give John, Tim and Lauren as much freedom as possible, you need to over-see both , the consultant), but in the mean time, we are routinely being beaten by both UPN FOX and we have to change our destiny before it's too late.

Morning news seems to be picking up, so it may be wise to adjust your daily schedule so that you have more direct oversight over the evening news. I think that temporarily changing your hours will also help the staff understand how serious our issues are and how committed you are to making sure they have a secure future.

Please let me know what you think.





**Berlamino, Betty Ellen**

From: Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
Sent: Friday, October 28, 2005 9:21 AM  
To: Scott, Karen  
Subject: last night's news numbers...

Were very disappointing....

We had a huge advantage over our competitors going into the broadcast and yet we ended up in last place and delivered a number 45% below our October average. The last quarter-hour of our prime (Everwood) delivered a 1.8 rating in A25-54 and our newscast averaged a 0.6. FOX was in a similar situation. Their movie delivered a 1.9 in the last quarter-hour and their broadcast delivered a 2.1 average. WWOR, on the other hand, averaged a 0.8 (Cuts) in their last quarter-hour of prime and yet their broadcast averaged a 1.1.

Needless to say, the news part of the Operating plan did not go well. Our two-year P&L of projected losses was, in essence rejected. This year the company invested \$26 million in news and lost almost \$3 million dollars. Next year's plan calls for a almost \$26 million in expenses with yet again, another projected loss.

Please give me a call when you get in as I'd like to set up a meeting this afternoon to discuss the future.

*Friday - no response  
I called on Monday*



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WPIX000168



**Berlamino, Betty Ellen**

**From:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 06, 2008 6:40 PM  
**To:** Scott, Karen; Houseman, John; Growick, Amy; Marra, Bob; Zeigler, John  
**Subject:** am news numbers from July

A18-49

	'07	'08	Rank
5-6am	.4	.4	#1 TIE
6-7am	.6	.5	#3 TIE
7-9am	.9	.5	#4

A25-54

	'07	'08	Rank
5-6am	.3	.4	#2
6-7am	.6	.5	#4 TIE
7-9am	.8	.5	#4

Needless to say.....the numbers in the market are terrible (that's why we hate Nielsen)....but, on the other hand, we need to TRY and come up with some ways to improve our numbers so that we can bring more money to the station....

So.....

I would like all of us to get together to discuss ideas and brain-storm about things we might want to change, improve, do more of, do less of, etc.....

Yes, it's a bit of an eclectic group....

But,

Karen/John/Amy.....you guys are responsible for the content

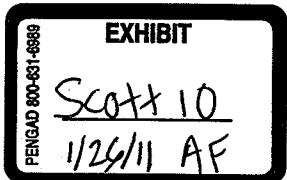
Bob.....you're responsible for selling it, making it profitable and the actual ROI for the entire news department

John...you're responsible for promoting it and helping to get higher numbers

And me, I'm responsible for everything....so, there you have it; we each have our own headaches!

With that said....I would like all of us to get together in a room (me MUST leave our egos at the door!) and brain-storm....before the meeting, I would encourage you to watch our competitors as well as the company's other newscasts on the mass logger (call engineering if you have a problem with this)...let's just THINK.....let's be innovative and let's come up with things to set ourselves apart....no idea is ridiculous (though it might be shot down by your colleagues...hence the ego thing).....this is NOT intended to criticize anyone, find fault with anyone or "blame" anyone for anything....it's kind of like, "hey, we're all in this together, does anyone have any ideas that we haven't thought of?" Ultimately, the news people will be the ultimate decision makers on content....but, let's give this a shot!

How is Thursday, August 21<sup>st</sup> from 10a-12n?



8/14/2009

CONFIDENTIAL

WPIX001436



**Berlamino, Betty Ellen**

**From:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
**Sent:** Monday, November 03, 2008 8:59 AM  
**To:** Scott, Karen; Lark, Noreen  
**Subject:** weekend news numbers

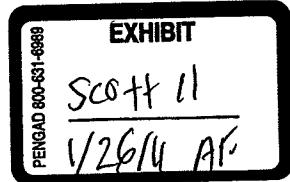
We had a particularly BAD weekend.....our shows experienced tremendous tune-out to the point that EVERY PERSON who started watching our show on Saturday TUNED-OUT....needless to say, this is not a factor of the lead-in, the promotion, etc...people started watching, but then they tuned over to another station when they decided they didn't want to watch US anymore....we need to make these shows BETTER so that we retain our audiences...weekend news is an important part of what we do and it's IMPERITIVE that we get these ratings up...the first way to start, is to make sure we retain the audience that we start with!

**SATURDAY:**

	A25-54	A18-49
10p	.7	.6
1015p	.5	.4
1030p	.2	.4
1035p	0	0

The same thing happened on Sunday...in A25-54 we started with a .4 and ended with a .1 In a18-49 we started with a .5 and ended with a .1

Unfortunately, these are not saleable numbers in this market...please take a hard look at the product you're putting on the air and what causes people to tune-out.. THANK YOU.



09/16/2008

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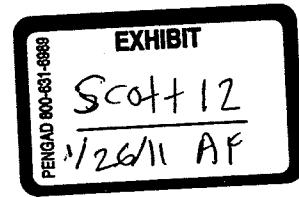
WPIX000174



**Berlamino, Betty Ellen**

**From:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 19, 2008 9:13 AM  
**To:** Scott, Karen  
**Subject:** we need

To discuss a change at 10pm...while I really like Tim, the numbers are simply working against him. I'm afraid that we will need to take these numbers seriously and move in a different direction....the needle is simply not moving and we are running out of time.....





**Berlamino, Betty Ellen**

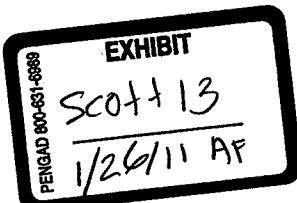
**From:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 20, 2008 9:40 AM  
**To:** Scott, Karen  
**Subject:** Late news

We had another disappointing night for late news last night....WWOR delivered almost THREE TIMES our audience in A25-54. I would STRONGLY ENCOURAGE you to think about changing your hours at least in the short term so that you can provide some guidance to late news staff because the current numbers are unacceptable. I would also like to discuss (e-mail sent yesterday) a new EP for the show.

WPIX last quarter-hour of prime 1.3  
WWOR last quarter-hour of prime 1.1

WWOR's A25-54 rating for late news: 1.1  
WPIX's A25-54 rating for late news: 0.4

We are clearly moving in the WRONG direction.....



01/10/0000

CONFIDENTIAL

**WPIX000176**



**Berlamino, Betty Ellen**

**From:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
**Sent:** Monday, December 01, 2008 2:36 PM  
**To:** Scott, Karen; Houseman, John; Armstrong, Tim  
**Cc:** Zeigler, John  
**Subject:** demos in late news

We finished #3 at 10pm in A25-54 and #2 in A18-49

**A25-54**

WNYW	1.7	2.2	+29%
WWOR	0.7	0.8	+14%
WPIX	1.2	0.7	-42%

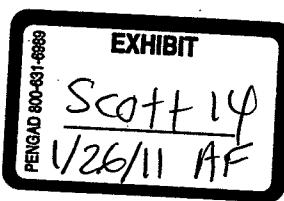
**A18-49**

WNYW	1.3	1.8	+38%
WPIX	1.2	0.9	-25%
WWOR	0.5	0.6	+20%

Please let me know how you plan to change this devastating slide around.....

8/14/2009

CONFIDENTIAL



**WPIX000178**



**Berlamino, Betty Ellen**

**From:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
**Sent:** Monday, December 01, 2008 3:20 PM  
**To:** Scott, Karen; Houseman, John; Growick, Amy  
**Cc:** Zeigler, John  
**Subject:** Morning News demos (A25-54)

430-5am

WABC .6 (NC)  
 WPIX .2 (-60%)  
 WNBC .2 (-33%)  
 WCBS .1 (-67%)

5-6am

WABC 1.0 (-23%)  
 WCBS .5 (NC)  
 WNBC .5 (+25%)  
 FOX .3 (NC)  
 WPIX .3 (-40%)

6-7am

WABC 1.8 (-14%)  
 WNBC 1.2 (+9%)  
 WCBS .8 (-27%)  
 FOX .6 (+20%)  
 WPIX .5 (-37%)

7-9am

WABC 2.1 (+5%)  
 WNBC 1.8 (+6%)  
 FOX .8 (NC)  
 WPIX .6 (-33%)  
 WCBS .5 (-37%)

Needless to say, this is devastating....I look forward to your "game plan" and your thoughts and ideas about what you're going to do going forward.....



01/12/2009

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WPIX000179

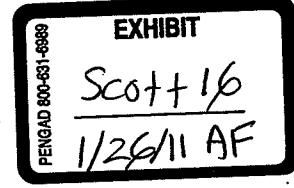


**From:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
**Sent:** Friday, December 19, 2008 12:11 PM  
**To:** Scott, Karen; Houseman, John  
**Subject:** we are the ONLY television station that doesn't have the mayor's press conference on now

I really don't understand why....

I got WCBS to give it to us.....and we still don't have it

We will never win the news competition if we don't get in the game



CONFIDENTIAL

WPIX000182



REDACTED

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**From:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
**Sent:** Monday, December 29, 2008 11:50 AM  
**To:** Zeigler, John; Scott, Karen; Houseman, John; Goyal, Akash  
**Cc:** Ocasio, Wil; Growick, Amy; Armstrong, Tim  
**Subject:** better communication between news and web...

I'm referring to everyone as two separate departments, but maybe that's the problem.....we have to start thinking "as one." The web is OUR EXTREMELY IMPORTANT SECOND CHANNEL/SOURCE OF INCOME (I guess that's the best way to put it)....it has to be treated with the same urgency that we treat our primary station.....there's no reason that we had to be the last station to post the Mangini fired story....everyone has to take responsibility...there should be better communication and sharing of responsibility between web and news...it's everyone's responsibility and everyone will be held accountable... it might be good for you guys to get together and figure out a "plan of attack" for 2009....we simple need to get better (and we can!!!! As long as everyone's on the same page and understands that it's a shared responsibility between news and web) ....

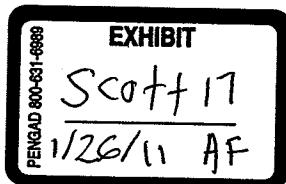
Let's become the model for "getting it right!!!"

YES, WE CAN..... (Where have I heard that before?)

9/21/2009

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WPIX000183



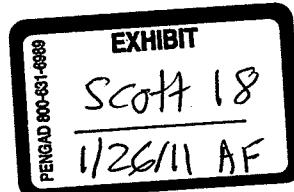


**Berlamino, Betty Ellen**

**From:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 30, 2008 6:32 PM  
**To:** Scott, Karen  
**Subject:** we seriously have to talk about Tim

There is a HUGE protest going on outside our building....the pro-Israel side is on one corner and the pro-Palestinian side is on the other...it is very loud and there are a ton of people out there...all news organizations, helicopters, etc....I literally MADE him get a crew out there to shoot some video to put up on the site and then he told me we weren't even covering it for News At Ten because "everyone was busy." He said Katy was working on the Illinois governor story and "every reporter typically only works on one story." I told him that the rules had changed...that a reporter can do two stories....then I suggested that an anchor go cover the story! Karen, it's scary...it is RIGHT OUTSIDE OUR WINDOW! We should OWN the story and he wasn't going to cover it....He just sent Peter out there after we "disagreed for a few minutes." He is not aggressive enough to win this war for us.....

(since you and John are both out, he really isn't qualified to lead)





REDACTED

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**From:** Berlamin, Betty Ellen  
**Sent:** Monday, January 19, 2009 6:19 PM  
**To:** Houseman, John; Scott, Karen; Growick, Amy; Armstrong, Tim; Zeigler, John; Goyal, Akash; Vannoni, Douglas  
**Subject:** integration of news & web...

As we discussed, it is time to FULLY MERGE the news and web departments (and by-the-way, IT WILL BE GREAT)! A "TV journalist" in 2009 must be responsible for contributing to both mediums. We can no longer make a "select few" "multi-media journalists; we need to hold everyone accountable. This is simply the evolution of TV, news, journalism and technology. Quite simply put, it's the world we live in! (Imagine, if you will, hiring an employee who didn't know how to send an e-mail!) Some things just seem ridiculous in '09! Anyway...if anyone is resisting this change...TRUST ME...it's foolish...if they go elsewhere to look for a job, they most likely won't be able to find one if they don't possess the skills to report on the internet (for further proof of this, just ask some of those people who USED TO work at WNBC)!

Anyway...it is where WE want to go...it's how OUR audience consumes news and it's the only way we'll continue to grow and evolve as a trusted and respected news station....

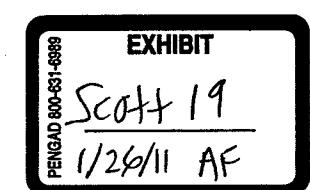
That being said, while John Houseman has the official "task" of integrating the web into the fabric of the news department, I want to re-iterate that it is EVERYONE'S responsibility!

I know that you will all work together to make this THE MOST SUCCESSFUL merger in the company!

Thanks.

9/21/2009

CONFIDENTIAL



WPIX000186



**From:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 01, 2009 12:10 PM  
**To:** Scott, Karen; Houseman, John; Armstrong, Tim  
**Cc:** Zeigler, John  
**Subject:** News At Ten, March 2009

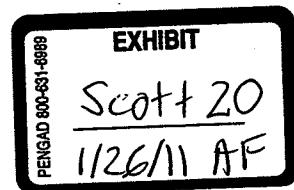
A25-54: We lost 33% of our audience on a year-to-year basis:

Here's a quarter-hour by quarter-hour breakout:

	2008	2009
1.0	1.5	
0.8	1.2	
0.6	1.0	
<u>0.6</u>	<u>0.9</u>	
Average:	0.8	1.2

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Anything below a 1 rating in A25-54 is basically unsaleable.



CONFIDENTIAL

WPIX000196



**Berlamino, Betty Ellen**

**From:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 02, 2009 5:56 AM  
**To:** Scott, Karen  
**Subject:** Fw: Joke is on us!

Karen, this is humiliating...makes our news pretty much a joke...as news director, you will need to take responsibility for this in the press, and I'm sure this will get quite a bit of attention...please provide me with all the internal details including every individual that knew of this story's existence....I would like to accelerate our time-line on Tim..today seems like the day to execute this plan....please contact steve charlier immediately and make him aware of this, I will handle randy and Ed...this is a professional embarrassment.

----- Original Message -----

**From:** Bellucci, Jessica  
**To:** Berlamino, Betty Ellen; Scott, Karen; Houseman, John  
**Cc:** Zeigler, John  
**Sent:** Wed Apr 01 23:47:23 2009  
**Subject:** Joke is on us!

We may get some flack in the press tomorrow for falling for an April Fool's Day hoax in tonights news (we ran a segment 10:30pm tonight and solicited viewer comments on Improv Everywhere—an improv group's video of them crashing a funeral—only it wasn't an improv stunt but an April Fool's prank!

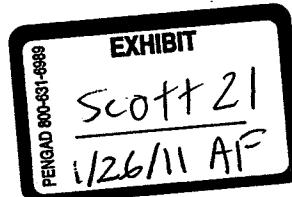
Not sure how we were the only ones not to realize it was a joke—they are a famous improv group and known for this type of stuff, especially on April Fools.... Anyway, Gothamist (the site who broke the story then debunked it this afternoon) has posted an item about us.

TV News Falls for Funeral Prank  
[http://gothamist.com/2009/04/01/video\\_april\\_fools\\_done\\_right\\_but\\_so.php](http://gothamist.com/2009/04/01/video_april_fools_done_right_but_so.php)

The Youtube videos -- both of the prank and also our air -- are embedded on the Gothamist page.

Akash is asking YouTube to pull all of the video viewers have uploaded from tonight's newscast. If we want, Akash has suggested we can do a PIXBlog post tomorrow with egg on our faces. (Which might be a good way to laugh about it and save face!)

Jessica Bellucci  
PIX 11 & WGN America  
Public Relations  
212-210-2626



TV News Falls for April Fools Funeral Prank! - Gothamist

[http://gothamist.com/2009/04/01/video\\_april\\_fools\\_done\\_right\\_but\\_s](http://gothamist.com/2009/04/01/video_april_fools_done_right_but_s)

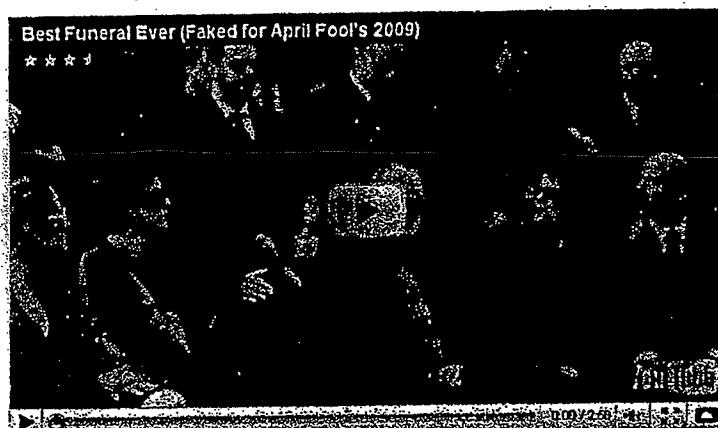
Client Server



### ols Funeral Prank!

es some prank to make fools of us all on this day, but the one they serve as an example of an April Fools' Day joke done well

(because so often these things go horribly wrong). They announce: "For our latest mission, 30 Improv Everywhere agents found a random funeral in the obituary section of the newspaper and turned it into the best funeral ever. We picked a man who had very few surviving relatives and then showed up to his funeral to make it truly awesome."



The Ghosts of Pasha have returned! They might have had us were it not April 1st.

Update: Looks like the team at Channel 11 didn't get the joke:



For those who *still* don't get that it was an April Fools' joke, Charlie Todd, who heads up the improv group,

WPIX000198

TV News Falls for April Fools Funeral Prank! - Gothamist

[http://gothamist.com/2009/04/01/video\\_april\\_fools\\_done\\_right\\_but\\_sc](http://gothamist.com/2009/04/01/video_april_fools_done_right_but_sc)

Twittered: "hahahahaha CW 11 in NY just covered the funeral prank as a REAL news story!"

By Jen Carlson in Arts and Events on April 1, 2009 11:10 PM · 75 Comments · 15 Likes

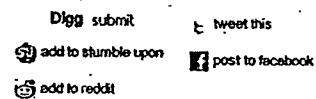
APRIL 1ST APRIL FOOLS DAY FUNERAL IMPROV EVERYWHERE VIDEO

EMAIL THIS ENTRY

To:  From:   
Message (not required):

Send

SHARE THIS ENTRY



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**NOW'S THE TIME**

SALES EVENT

**JIM WATKINS**

a WPIX 11 blog



[« Smoke 'Em If You Can Afford 'Em](#) | [Main](#) | [The April Fools](#) »

Apr  
2

## The April Fool's Funeral: Who Really Got Punk'd?



Our 10 PM newscast Wednesday night included a piece on an April Fool's joke by a local guerrilla theater group called Improv Everywhere. The joke, as we seemed to report it, was that the group was playing a prank, called "Best Funeral Ever," on some unknowing folks at a sparsely attended graveside ceremony at Brooklyn's Greenwood Cemetery. Check out IE's description and photos of how they pulled off the prank:

*"I knew this would be a very sensitive subject, but I thought that if Improv Everywhere could spread a little joy to the saddest place of all, it would be an amazing feat. The first step was picking the right funeral. It was critical that the funeral would be very sparsely attended. My biggest fear was showing up to do this and finding tons of friends and family already there. I started scanning through the obituaries to find short entries that mentioned very few surviving relatives."*

It's pretty funny, in a sick way, the notion of people at a funeral stunned to discover dozens of complete strangers showing up to pay their respects to the dearly departed. So PIX News at 10 ran a piece of video, narrated by yours truly, describing the funeral prank, and asking viewers if they thought it was funny or in bad taste.

But it turns out that prank wasn't really The Prank. Improv Everywhere's real April Fool's joke was that the "surprised" people at the funeral were actors who were also part of the gag. The WHOLE THING was an April Fool's joke to make people think this group would actually do something like use a grieving family as props for one of its street theater pieces.

On its website Improv Everywhere was certainly crowing about fooling us today. Don't worry. I took a screenshot:

### Comments: 121

Posted by Julia at April 2, 2009 9:23 PM

I don't know how a funeral joke could be funny. I must say this. I use to work for a cemetary, in the office actually. This man came in every week and visited his three deceased wives. He was

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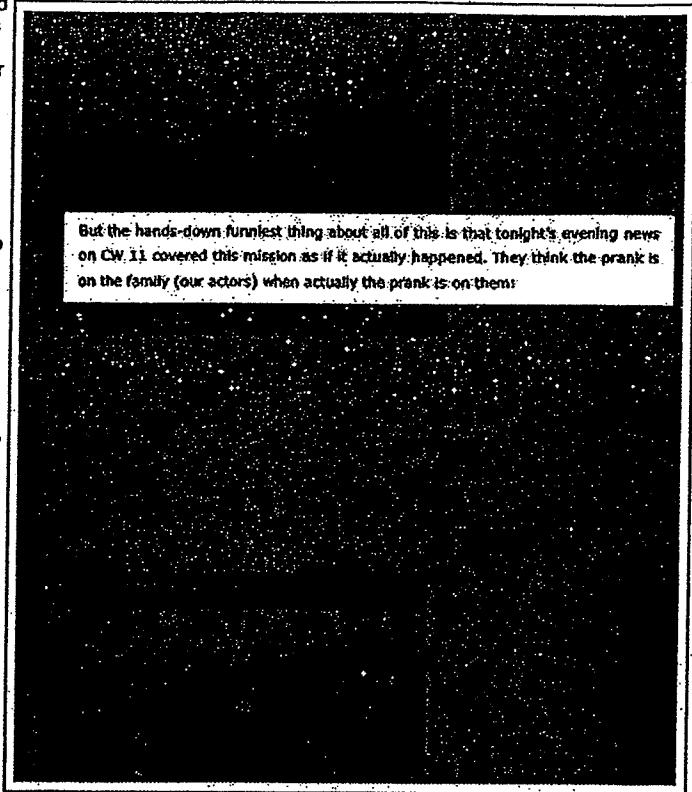


**VOTE on the**  
**Elements of their**  
**\$100,000**  
**Wedding!**

Rick Helman Photography

**WPIX000200**

very nice, and I'm sure he is buried now beside one or two of them. Also, it was surreal when the cemetary diggers went on strike and the bodies were piling up and covered over in tents. This was quite strange and quite spooky. The cemetary is a peaceful place. I use to sit under the trees and read my books. I finished

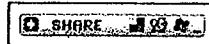


*"But the hands-down funniest thing about all of this is that tonight's evening news on CW 11 covered this mission as if it actually happened. They think the prank is on the family (our actors) when actually the prank is on them."*

Or is it??

Burying an April Fool's joke within an April Fool's joke is controversial, and quite possibly illegal in New York State. But once it's been done, what's to keep the alleged punk-ee from going for triple or nothing? What if I told you that some of us at PIX News didn't think this whole funeral thing passed the smell test? And that, suspecting we were being played, decided to report the story as if we believed it, to see if Improv Everywhere would fall for it, and think they'd actually fooled one of the local TV stations, and put us all over their website, with links sending people back to OUR website? Remember, it was April Fool's Day for us, too.

So you guys were great, and your gag was very funny. But what I just wrote? Now THAT'S good improv!



GODFATHER 1 and I NEVER PROMISED YOU A ROSE GARDEN, when I worked there. I also got pregnant when I worked in the cemetary, actually, it was when I just started working there. So I guess death brings new life. This is all true and not a "cemetary joke". When I was a kid, we use to hang out in the cemetary, because it was so quiet and peaceful. And I even love horror movies.

Posted by Chris at April 2, 2009 9:30 PM

Jim and Kaity, you look so happy in this picture, that I wonder who will be laughing at your funerals. Black humor I guess.

Posted by Melissa at April 2, 2009 10:14 PM

Nice try!

It's bizarre to me that you think pretending YOU were pranking THEM makes you look more credible than saying "Wow, they got us too."

**WPIX000201**

Improv Everywhere is a website that, like many, played a joke on its readers. You, however, are the NEWS. It's IE's job to prank people -especially on April Fools day -of all days! It's YOUR job to report the news accurately and to check your facts, not to pull pranks.

I mean hey, I can't wait to see channel 11's "prank" next year. Maybe they'll tell the country the president has been assassinated -with no retraction. Or maybe OTHER people in positions that are SUPPOSED to be trustworthy and credible will follow channel 11's lead? Maybe doctors will tell all their patients that they have cancer on April first. Or police will arrest innocent people all over the USA on April first -as a prank.

If my doctor told me I had cancer, and the next day told me it was a prank, I'd never see him again. If he told me he'd been fooled by someone in the lab and apologized for giving me inaccurate info, I might go back.

Posted by Joe from CT at April 2, 2009 10:20 PM

I think this was in bad taste.

Posted by Melissa at April 2, 2009 10:21 PM

(How's my improving? :))

Posted by Melissa at April 2, 2009 10:22 PM

(How's my improving? :))

[Drat! Not going through! :D ]

Posted by new yorks darkest voice at April 2, 2009 10:34 PM

I think everybody needs to just go back to their caves & cool off here a bit..

IE, nice work, but you picked on the big retarded kid, so don't hurt yourselves patting yourselves on the back to hard.

and jim, my loves wpix because everyone grew up with that big retarded kid on his or her block, so we all got a soft spot for ya. just don't ever think we take you seriously as anything else but the station that gives us a burning log on christmas morning & pretty much the same burning wood on air for it's news the rest of the year.

-although the new sports guy's lisp has us all thinking a little more flaming that burning, if you know what we're talking about... but hey, don't ask, don't tell, i mean you do have a tranny doing sports on the weekends.

Posted by ray gunz at April 2, 2009 10:49 PM

I think jim watkins u are lowzy and board and BOARNG....Zzzzzzzzzzz

Posted by Mel at April 2, 2009 10:53 PM

Wow... people get a grip. April Fool's Day is not even funny anymore these days, who cares?

And new yorks darkest voice, was all that even necessary? Really now.

Posted by Improv everywhere bites at April 2, 2009 10:58 PM

Improv everywhere sucks big time. That gag wasnt a bit funny!

Posted by Ben at April 2, 2009 11:01 PM

Um, WPIX, do you think your reporting should maybe extend beyond regurgitating a youtube video and portraying it as fact?

Posted by sam rochester at April 2, 2009 11:02 PM

Melissa-  
get a life you douche.  
what do you work for IE... ugh.. you are ridiculous.

WPIX000202

[http://weblogs.wpix.com/news/jimwatkins/2009/04/the\\_april\\_fools\\_funeral\\_who\\_re.html](http://weblogs.wpix.com/news/jimwatkins/2009/04/the_april_fools_funeral_who_re.html)

9/22/2010

Keep up the good work Jim and Kaitly!

Posted by Samantha at April 2, 2009 11:10 PM

Jim rocks!

Posted by new yorks darkest voice at April 2, 2009 11:15 PM

well, now, Mel, you're right, why ameliorate useless truth with humor, that's just nuttiness gone cuckoo - but, you know, few things feel better than a nice stinging rant or good dump for that matter... and, if the show fits..

Posted by just wondering at April 2, 2009 11:27 PM

Then new yorks darkest voice, why do you bother to watch channel 11 if you think its crap?

Posted by Mark at April 3, 2009 11:02 AM

Ummmm ... no, it's actually not "good improv" (your last paragraph).

You guys should've quit while you were behind, you're starting to look REALLY silly now. Before you had the excuse that you didn't know what was really going on, but now you don't ...

Posted by new yorks darkest voice at April 3, 2009 12:34 PM

@just wondering: i watch because i love, and most especially it may be crap, but it's my hometown crap..

Posted by anonymous at April 3, 2009 12:36 PM

this is why no one watches your lame news channel - start finding some real stories instead of hiring dumb people to create news

Posted by just wondering at April 3, 2009 12:57 PM

@newyork's darkest voice: I got it, you make sense. But they must be doing something right in order to make you tune in, dont you think?

Posted by Betty at April 3, 2009 3:36 PM

Jim, Jim, Jim....it's obvious that these people posting here just don't get it. Your blog gave me my first laugh of the day at work. Thanks!

Posted by Allison at April 3, 2009 3:42 PM

honestly, what i read above proves to me that you at CW are just covering your butts (excuse my language) for terrible, terrible reporting. this goes to show how faulty our news is today. why didnt you try to do a little research and contact the cemetary or improv everywhere before running the story. thats what journalism SHOULD be about, the hardcore, researched, and legitimate FACTS. you are just making yourselves look worse by saying "oh yeah, we knew all along." please. lets try not to lie to your viewers TWICE. this whole thing is just ridiculous and lets try to apologize and be honest before lying. i wouldnt write this comment if you had said "we were fooled! sorry!" lets get some REAL news out there.

Posted by N. Miller at April 3, 2009 4:28 PM

To Julia: I used to visit the cemetary (Woodlawn in the Bronx) too every once in a while because it is the most peaceful place I know. Quiet, peaceful, and very, very beautiful in spring and summer, with the flowers and trees in full bloom. Nothing but that, the chirping birds and of course the headstones and elaborate, grand mausoleums. Absolutely beautiful. :)

Posted by N. Miller at April 3, 2009 4:28 PM

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WPIX000203

Posted by N. Miller at April 3, 2009 4:39 PM

Whoops sorry for the double comment posting!

Posted by Anonymous at April 3, 2009 5:23 PM

TO new yorks darkest voice: some of what you're saying is downright cruel but I'll be damned if your wording isn't funny as hell.

Posted by Freddy Master B at April 3, 2009 8:39 PM

Jim;

It was a great April Fool's Joke but that's all I can say.Except I'm glad it wasn't my funeral

Posted by Julia to N. Miller at April 3, 2009 9:03 PM

Thanks for the comment. I use to think people thought I was crazy for taking my lunch hour in the cemetary and reading under a tree. It is the most beautiful cemetary, at least I think so, in NY. My parents are buried there now, so it is sadder than it use to be, however, it is still a lovely place, with the trees and flowers, especially in the spring and so very peaceful.

Posted by Seltzer Jones at April 4, 2009 12:18 AM

That is a ludicrous defense of plain lazy reporting. Not only do you not admit to your total lack of fact-checking but you are deviously attempting to glom onto Improv Everywhere's original idea to generate hipster quotient for yourself. It is transparent and unprofessional. Own up to your failure to report the news accurately.

Posted by Kit Inme at April 4, 2009 3:45 AM

I would be upset if you weren't on the CW. It might have even been acceptable from a Fox affiliate, but still. Kudos to the person that gave this story a green light. The fact that you still have a job and 8 million people have lost their's says a lot.

Posted by anonymous at April 4, 2009 11:33 AM

People need to chill...this isn't even that serious! Yes, more research should have been put into the story, but it's not the end of the world. It's not like the CW messed up on a big story...this was just about a crappy improv group that crashed a funeral...so the whole thing was a joke...who cares!

Posted by Kat at April 4, 2009 4:41 PM

Death jokes are in bad taste, even if it's an April Fool joke.

Posted by Kat at April 4, 2009 4:42 PM

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Posted by Kat at April 4, 2009 4:42 PM

Death jokes are in bad taste, even if it's an April Fool joke.

Posted by len dean at April 4, 2009 6:41 PM

So you're saying you intentionally aired a story you knew to be false? Quality Journalism there. But I don't believe it for a second. You did some lazy reporting, never fact-checked or contacted those involved and ended up looking stupid. Now you're trying to cover your butt.

WPIX000204

Posted by Marshall at April 5, 2009 12:37 AM

I have to agree, looks like WPIX is just trying to C.Y.A becuase you reported on something without even BOTHERING to check things first. I understand "Action" reporting where you have to jump the gun and report on something, but even stories like THAT are followed with statements like... "We are still trying to get all the details"

Next time just say "Hey, it was a joke, and we fell for it.. no harm no foul"

Posted by Kyle Yates at April 5, 2009 1:00 AM

Did it EVER cross your mind to check your sources?

"Burying an April Fool's joke within an April Fool's joke is controversial, and quite possibly illegal in New York State."

You got punk'd AND on top of that gave them free advertisement. I think if any law was broken, it was WPIX false reporting. Next time, admit you are wrong and stop pointing the finger. You disgrace news-broadcasting by running such pieces as this.

Posted by Len Dean at April 5, 2009 2:08 PM

HOT NEWS TIP!!! Apparently there's this girl who has a crush on Obama called "Obama Girl" and there's this guy who wants us to "Just leave Britney Alone!" and a baby panda who seezed! All on youtube! Can't wait to see it on tonight's news!

Posted by Rayna at April 6, 2009 3:16 AM

Poor Jimmy, Just admit you guys were done in and get over it... Stop. You know you were. So were most people just get over it and admit it.

Posted by Alex at April 6, 2009 6:37 AM

Wow. You remind me of my 5 year old nephew when he has a prank pulled on him.

"I knew it was a joke, I was just fooling you guys!"

Right. Oh, and this little piece of journalistic genius:

"Burying an April Fool's joke within an April Fool's joke is controversial, and quite possibly illegal in New York State."

Really? I wasn't aware of a law passed about April Frickin' Fools Day.

You are almost unbelievably stupid; sir, and I cannot see any valid reason for somebody to be paying you to come up with this insensible droll. Please, for all of us, go find a brick and beat yourself over the head with it.

Posted by Ted at April 6, 2009 10:06 AM

To the people who don't understand:

The prank was a JOKE. There was no funeral.

Jim was JOKING when he said that the prank was actually on ImprovEverywhere.

Posted by Anonymous at April 6, 2009 2:04 PM

PIX's MORNING NEWS SUCKS !  
LITERALLY, is it necessary to have 2 women do something AS SIMPLE AS A TRAFFIC REPORT !

They just hired two young women in a pathetic way to draw viewers.  
Also that sukanya is one of the two most ANNOYING PEOPLE ON THIS SO CALLED SHOW.  
I miss when CHANNEL 11 HAD NO NEWS, and cartoons and shows in the morning.  
Why is all regular television, ALL NEWS, AND REALITY CRAP.

Posted by Anonymous at April 6, 2009 2:06 PM

That picture is STUPID !

**WPIX000205**

Posted by owned at April 6, 2009 2:49 PM

.owned

Posted by Anonymous at April 6, 2009 5:24 PM

That's gotta be the lamest way to cover your arse. "Oh no... WE pranked YOU, Improv Everywhere." .

Posted by plug at April 6, 2009 6:01 PM

Wow, Jim you are truly stupid... if u had bothered to pay attention to the way the actors acted in the April Fools video, compared to their real pranks, you would have known that something was wrong...

Posted by Ryan at April 6, 2009 6:23 PM

I have a journalism degree, but I've never worked in television. Still, I like to think my reaction to *Improv Everywhere* wouldn't be to knowingly mislead viewers.

If CW11 didn't know it was a prank, they've done nothing wrong and were simply pulled in by the gag.

But if CW11 knew it was a prank, and reported it as fact, they've done everything wrong and really need to study up on their ethics.

This would be interesting to discuss in a journalism class.

Posted by sharon at April 6, 2009 7:19 PM

it's not even Jim who probably wrote the story or even chose for it to air. he's simply the face of the news. it's people behind the scenes that are probably at fault here.

Posted by Anonymous at April 6, 2009 10:15 PM

I like how Jim tries to pretend like he didn't get pranked and didn't waste valuable air time on another stupid news report.

Try reporting real news instead of worthless crap for once.

**Posted by Anonymous at April 8, 2009 3:07 PM**

You guys really need to do your research before putting stories on television. And to pretend that you were doing a ridiculous April Fools joke, just to cover up your poor practice of journalism is petty. I hope there was a written or public retraction of the "facts" in the story because without it, Improv Everywhere could probably sue you for public defamation. So you better get off that "we knew all along" note and just straight up admit to and apologize for your horrible journalism. Seriously, I'd understand a blog to run a random YouTube video without checking the facts, but a News Station that's broadcasted on TV...this is worse than relying on wikipedia for facts.

Posted by Anonymous at April 8, 2009 3:08 PM

You guys really need to do your research before putting stories on television. And to pretend that you were doing a ridiculous April Fools joke, just to cover up your poor practice of journalism is petty. I hope there was a written or public retraction of the "facts" in the story because without it, Improv Everywhere could probably sue you for public defamation. So you better get off that "we knew all along" note and just straight up admit to and apologize for your horrible journalism. Seriously, I'd understand a blog to run a random YouTube video without checking the facts, but a News Station that's broadcasted on TV...this is worse than relying on wikipedia for facts.

Posted by Barbara at April 14, 2009 8:36 PM

They punked YOU! Believing it and screening their video on your show was lame. This is why I don't watch local news shows: the broadcasters have great hair but no journalistic ability.

WBIY000206

Posted by Streisand Effect at April 15, 2009 5:40 AM

Funny how you seem to be a good sport about it here, but you still sent them a takedown notice on Youtube for their fair use of your clip of their material.

Posted by Adam at April 15, 2009 6:45 AM

Nice try, guys. But this is so obviously just you trying to cover your own butts.

Oh, by the way. You used a copyrighted video in your news report. Did you guys ever think about that?

Posted by c. MacDugal at April 15, 2009 8:37 AM

Wait a minute, claim that you knew it was an April fools joke but reported it as real anyway. Doesn't that violate ALL journalistic integrity and isn't it also "controversial, and quite possibly illegal in New York State"?

Posted by c. MacDugal at April 15, 2009 8:37 AM

Wait a minute, you claim that you knew it was an April fools joke but reported it as real anyway. Doesn't that violate ALL journalistic integrity and isn't it also "controversial, and quite possibly illegal in New York State"?

Posted by Webster at April 15, 2009 9:16 AM

CW FAIL!

Posted by Aaron at April 15, 2009 9:19 AM

So you guys \*HAVE\* rescinded your copyright infringement claim, right?

You know.. the one mentioned on their site? ( <http://improveeverywhere.com/2009/04/14/cw-11-files-copyright-claim/> )

Clearly this is a "fair use doctrine" issue, not a copyright infringement issue. Lighten up, guys.

Posted by Bob T at April 15, 2009 10:12 AM

Seriously, you were fooled, you did no fact-checking, you failed as journalists. Don't try to turn it around like you are shamelessly trying to.

Posted by dave at April 15, 2009 10:36 AM

In OPG v Diebold the court asserted that section 512(f) of the DMCA can be interpreted as – "Thus, any person who sends a cease and desist letter with knowledge that claims of infringement are false may be liable for damages."

So, crappy reporting leads to a possible illegal action by the parent organization and your response is a lame joke(?) that

"Burying an April Fool's joke within an April Fool's joke is controversial, and quite possibly illegal in New York State."

How about some reporting on whether the Trib's actions were illegal?

Posted by Reader at April 15, 2009 1:57 PM

LAME. Tribune and WPIX both epic fail at reporting the news and having a sense of humor. And you're not very funny, either. Can't wait for TV news to go out of business, like the newspapers.

Posted by Manuel at April 15, 2009 4:45 PM

yeah, sure.

What a sore attempt at a comeback.

**WPIX000207**

Burying an April fool's joke with in a april fool's joke illegal ... hahaha, that was a good one!

Posted by JeffMo at April 15, 2009 5:02 PM

Jim:

I suppose we should give you partial credit for this half-hearted attempt lightheartedness about the issue.

However, I feel someone should give you a serious answer to the title question, "The April Fool's Funeral: Who Really Got Punk'd?"

Your station did. You know it. Sack up and admit it.

Posted by Anonymous at April 15, 2009 5:16 PM

<http://improveeverywhere.com/2009/04/14/cw-11-files-copyright-claim/>

Posted by One law for the ruler at April 15, 2009 5:41 PM

You steal copyrighted content from YouTube and air it on your show. Then when the copyright owner places your airing on YouTube, you serve them a takedown notice?

You should be ashamed of yourselves.

It's no wonder the traditional media finds itself knee-deep in its own grave holding a shovel.

Posted by tony. at April 15, 2009 6:01 PM

Jim Watkins you are a ridiculous clown. CW11 are a bunch of schleps who should be embarrassed for not fact checking a story they found on YOUTUBE and you're an even bigger schlep for trying to deflect the failure back at the source.

Hopefully you're not getting paid much (if at all) for your journalistic efforts here.

Posted by Wayne at April 15, 2009 6:16 PM

Dear Mr. Watkins,

You know, I think you are absolutely right.

It's actually quite big of you to admit it like that.

You should be proud of yourself for being so honest.

Freely admitting that any given news story you report is likely to be a contrived stunt wholly unrelated to the truth is a bold step.

Many news organizations fail to do proper research and falling into a trap like that would make them look terrible. Not you though! Not at all! You can't fall into that pit trap because you've already stated that you're at the bottom of the pit and loving it down there.

So keep regaling your audience with unresearched nonsense and stupidity! When they decide they've had enough they can always change the channel and watch some real news somewhere else.

Kudos to you, Mr. I-Don't-Claim-To-Do-My-Homework-So-You-Can't-Embarrass-Me-When-You-Catch-Me-With-It-Undone-News-Reporter-Man!

Posted by Alex McQuown at April 15, 2009 6:19 PM

Haha, and that's why your parent company Tribune filed a DMCA against someone who caught your video and uploaded it to youtube.

The better improv is that this person, whose material you used without permission, is going to file a counter-claim, and then sue you into oblivion.

And nobody's falling for your "We didn't believe it" schtick. My little brother, when I read your words to him, said "He's a liar." You can't even fool a ten year old child.

Posted by Chris at April 15, 2009 8:21 PM

**WPIX000208**

[http://weblogs.wpix.com/news/jimwatkins/2009/04/the\\_april\\_fools\\_funeral\\_who\\_re.html](http://weblogs.wpix.com/news/jimwatkins/2009/04/the_april_fools_funeral_who_re.html)

9/22/2010

Suuuure thing there, Jimbo. You are LOCAL NEWS – that's synonymous with "gullible" and "irrelevant." Local news is losing viewership not because we feel we can't trust it, it's because we already know more about your top stories by air time than you do. At least your hair looked good.

As an aside: "it's" is a contraction; "its" is a possessive. Good old UT Journalism.

"On its website Improv Everywhere..."

Posted by mike at April 15, 2009 8:34 PM

You seem like a p\*\*\*\* to me.

You also happen to look like one :D

Posted by Bob at April 15, 2009 9:00 PM

I get it, you got had, it's a little embarrassing, saying that you pranked IE was a joke but...

What's not funny is claiming copyright infringement on Improve Everywhere for using footage that you stole from them.

<http://improveeverywhere.com/2009/04/14/cw-11-files-copyright-claim/>

Perhaps you lazy reporters might want to research The Streisand Effect of which you are now victims. Congrats

Posted by Greg at April 15, 2009 9:03 PM

This is why he works for LOCAL news and not national. When you cover things like kitty fashion shows, you don't have to care about fact checking.

Posted by Anonymous at April 15, 2009 10:47 PM

I hope you look at this and realize what a failure you are at journalism. The worst part is your sniveling back peddling. Everyone knows you didn't do a second of research and now you're trying to cover it up. It's shameful.

Posted by anonymous LOSER at April 15, 2009 10:50 PM

Jim probably didn't write the story it's not his fault. blame the person who decided to put it on tv....you're a dumb ass for even saying he's a failure at journalism.

Posted by Chris at April 15, 2009 11:13 PM

That's why everyone thinks this channel is dumb, they don't even understand half the stuff they're talking about, next time don't cover something as stupid as this, and if you do, at least check the facts for if it's even REAL or not. wow you guys...

Posted by loch at April 15, 2009 11:21 PM

what if I told you that you are a retard?

"But what I just wrote? Now THAT'S good improv!"

So apparently you are not just gullible, you are also out of touch with life...how the hell does TYPING nonsensical bull\$hit on a blog constitute improv? And regardless of what it is, what it definitely was not is GOOD.

Posted by Ricky at April 15, 2009 11:48 PM

Do you have any idea what you are talking about? Since when does news reporter become this ignorant AND arrogant?

Posted by Michael at April 16, 2009 12:34 AM

Ah, so I suppose your station's casual violation of the DMCA for takedown purposes on a fair use video was part of the prank too, eh? Give me a break.

WPIX000209

[http://weblogs.wpix.com/news/jimwatkins/2009/04/the\\_april\\_fools\\_funeral\\_who\\_re.html](http://weblogs.wpix.com/news/jimwatkins/2009/04/the_april_fools_funeral_who_re.html)

9/22/2010

Posted by Mike K at April 16, 2009 12:45 AM

Three points:

1. "Burying an April Fool's joke within an April Fool's joke is controversial, and quite possibly illegal in New York State"

What??? So you've been had and you're reaction is to act like a five year old sore loser? Does you really think New York State really have legislation against April Fool's jokes?

2. "But once it's been done, what's to keep the alleged punk-ee from going for triple or nothing?"

Well if, as you say, the double prank is "probably illegal in New York State", then how legal do you imagine a triple prank is. That line of reasoning should keep the alleged punk-ee from going for "triple or nothing".

3. "I've included a screenshot"

So it's okay for you to include a screenshot from Improv Everywhere's website but when they include a clip of your report, it's a copyright claim (<http://improveeverywhere.com/2009/04/14/cw-11-files-copyright-claim/>). Does the phrase "double standards" ring any bells?

Posted by Bill at April 16, 2009 2:52 AM

Why report on the original 'prank' in the first place? It's equally stupid, whether you thought it was real or fake. What, you ran out of kittens-stuck-in-drywall stories?

Please, everyone, if you just stopped watching local TV 'news', maybe they'd get rid of it altogether.

Posted by Edward Wong Hau Pepelu Tivrusky The Fourth~ at April 16, 2009 3:01 AM

~To his mouth blabber, even more so the part where he mentions "hey it was an April fools day for us too" ----- Proof please~

Posted by Enrico at April 16, 2009 6:26 AM

"What if I told you that some of us at PIX News didn't think this whole funeral thing passed the smell test? And that, suspecting we were being played, decided to report the story as if we believed it, to see if Improv Everywhere would fall for it, and think they'd actually fooled one of the local TV stations, and put us all over their website, with links sending people back to OUR website? Remember, it was April Fool's Day for us, too"

What's to say you weren't punking others?

Err the fact that you've been running around the internet trying to remove it in embarrassment?

Face it - you got punked, this additional level of "no, no it was us punking them, honest" is just childish

On the other hand it is entertaining - so carry on

(might I suggest that you next try to claim the DMCA takedown notices you issued to take down content of you reporting on content, which you didn't have copyright for in the first place, was just some sort of absurdist art thing?)

Posted by Anonymous at April 16, 2009 8:09 AM

Please report on the Copyright claim: <http://improveeverywhere.com/2009/04/14/cw-11-files-copyright-claim/>

Posted by sm at April 16, 2009 10:43 AM

I'm with stupid...

Posted by Deanna at April 16, 2009 11:14 AM

What are you, 12? You're being ridiculous. You are a news reporter, yet you rush with an

WPIX000210

unconfirmed story like you work for a gossip mag. Later, when you have egg on your face, you post this asinine drivel while your company issues a takedown notice to IA (even though you snagged their video without any care of copyright). This whole thing left a bad taste in my mouth. Shame on you.

Posted by Deanna at April 16, 2009 11:15 AM

What are you, 12? You're being ridiculous. You are a news reporter, yet you rush with an unconfirmed story like you work for a gossip mag. Later, when you have egg on your face, you post this asinine drivel while your company issues a takedown notice to IA (even though you snagged their video without any care of copyright). This whole thing left a bad taste in my mouth. Shame on you.

Posted by Suyash Ramineni at April 16, 2009 12:51 PM

Deanna above has said everything I wanted to say. However, this I would personally like to repeat again - "Shame on you" and your news agency for not verifying the piece of news some reporter brought in.

Posted by Oso at April 16, 2009 2:05 PM

I think it's safe to say that a good many of us in the internet community are inclined to believe that you, sir, are trying desperately to cover up a rather large blunder. Lets be honest here, you wouldn't be issuing copyright infringement complaints if you actually knew this to be a prank. Regardless, at this point everyone on the internet who sees your actions and reactions to said prank are going to view you as foolish, and based on your reactions you have already lost any hopes of respect and are a pure laughing stock at this point. All it takes is swallowing pride and admitting a mistake to rectify the situation.

Posted by nom nom at April 16, 2009 5:39 PM

American news is so lame.

Posted by James at April 16, 2009 7:46 PM

Wow. This post just sounds.. angry. :/

Posted by Gibran at April 16, 2009 11:32 PM

Jim Watkins, you are a tool.

Posted by anonymous at April 17, 2009 6:28 AM

Aw you sound like a sore-loser.

greetings from Asia, south east asia. You know where that is?

Posted by Doum at April 17, 2009 11:39 AM

This is the most ridiculous comeback attempt i've ever seen, read or heard. I pity you.

Posted by Anonymous at April 18, 2009 2:47 AM

Honestly, I think you just need to be a man and accept that they got you. That whole last paragraph, about how you "pranked them" was total bull and you know it. Just man up and admit you got tricked, don't try to cover it like an insecure little child.

Posted by DrWimpy at April 18, 2009 6:33 AM

Damn!

I thought we had you but you called the "I'm rubber and you're glue" defense.

Kudos, WPIX, and now without interruption...

Posted by DrWimpy at April 18, 2009 6:56 AM

Retraction of my last post.

I've been a fan of WPIX since 1955.

The last line of my previous post should have been:

"... and now without further interruption..."

a reference to how WPIX has ended the Saturday afternoon movies for the last fifty years or so.

Hey, I've loved guys you since way before Buffy and Smallville ... Creature Feature!

Posted by Jaypoc at April 18, 2009 10:30 AM

This is disgusting:

"What if I told you that some of us at PIX News didn't think this whole funeral thing passed the smell test? And that, suspecting we were being played, decided to report the story as if we believed it, to see if Improv Everywhere would fall for it"

First of all, if that was the case, then you knowingly reported false news which questions your credibility. Plus, if you were just playing, and trying to get that reaction, then you wouldn't have filed a copyright take down with YouTube to remove your "false" report once Improv Everywhere let it out that the gag was a prank.

I wouldn't be surprised to find my comment deleted, but I sincerely hope you have the decency to allow both positive and negative feedback.

See my report and the removed video at My blog

Posted by Celestial Anachronism at April 18, 2009 12:20 PM

Your entire news station lost its credibility, right there, in one go. You're pathetic and your journalism skills are worse than those of a ten-year-old.

Posted by BlackTenshi at April 20, 2009 3:19 AM

How could you fall for that? It was obviously a joke, hahahahahaha. Great "news"...

Posted by Bryan at April 20, 2009 4:27 AM

Thankfully I dont live where I can receive "WPIX". Jim Watkins you're a moron. Get out of news. Time to work in fast food, again.

Posted by Anonymous at April 21, 2009 3:28 PM

Epic fail once again. I can't say I lost all respect for CW 11 news because of this incident. I already thought this channel's reporting was as poor as Fox news.

Posted by Matt at April 22, 2009 12:07 PM

Just own up to the fact that you got punked. You failed to do your research on something and it shows loud and clear. Your response to this whole thing just makes you look like a bigger fool.

Posted by Feek at April 22, 2009 11:41 PM

Yeah, right. Your rebuttal is like that of an infant. What happened? Large media company slurped online content and then took legal action when their slurpage of online content was put back online. Journalism should not be about hiding behind lawyers and double standards. Take it like a big boy who got 'had' on April fools - you won't be the first. PS: By visiting this site, you are agreeing to our Privacy Policy & Terms of Service. Um.. no I'm not.

Posted by Feek at April 22, 2009 11:43 PM

Yeah, right. Your rebuttal is like that of an infant. What happened? Large media company slurped online content and then took legal action when their slurpage of online content was put back online. Journalism should not be about hiding behind lawyers and double standards. Take it like a big boy who got 'had' on April fools - you won't be the first. PS: By visiting this site, you are agreeing to our Privacy Policy & Terms of Service. Um.. no I'm not.

**WPIX000212**

Posted by Feek at April 22, 2009 11:43 PM

Yeah, right. Your rebuttal is like that of an infant. What happened? Large media company slurped online content and then took legal action when their slurpage of online content was put back online. Journalism should not be about hiding behind lawyers and double standards. Take it like a big boy who got 'had' on April fools - you won't be the first. PS: By visiting this site, you are agreeing to our Privacy Policy & Terms of Service. Um.. no I'm not.

Posted by Chris at April 23, 2009 2:05 PM

Seriously, you got YouTube to take down their videos for copyright infringement? Try doing some real reporting, instead of ripping stuff off YouTube, then claiming that the originators of the prank were violating your copyright.

Posted by Danielle at April 25, 2009 2:28 PM

"...And that, suspecting we were being played, decided to report the story as if we believed it, to see if Improv Everywhere would fall for it, and think they'd actually fooled one of the local TV stations, and put us all over their website, with links sending people back to OUR website?..."  
Sin #1: Poor reporting. (Regurgitating youtube fodder= gossip, not reporting.) Is it true you didn't even call IE before airing your "report"?  
Sin #2: Not seeing the irony in bawling copyright infringement when you obviously did not ask permission to use IE's youtube video on your "news" story.  
Sin #3: Not laughing at yourself.  
Sin #4: Posting such utter idiocy.  
Sin #5: The atrocious grammar in your quote up there. You're supposed to be a professional.

"So you guys were great, and your gag was very funny. But what I just wrote? Now THAT'S good improv!"  
Improv is not political two-stepping. Improv is play. You obviously don't play nice. Get out of the sandbox.

Posted by wunami at April 27, 2009 5:37 PM

Just one question, do you have video of the decision making behind running this as a segment? Does it show you discussing that you'll be playing along. Cause Improv Everywhere certainly has a video showing their plans all along as not really a funeral.

The more you damage control, the worse you guys look. There's respect in just admitting they got you. You just look stupid if you make a lame after the fact excuse like this.

Also, why does TV media think it's okay to steal from internet based media, but that the other way around is not okay? Do you think you are better than the internet? Because I have to say, it sure doesn't seem that way going by how you guys are playing this.

Posted by Bill at April 29, 2009 11:02 AM

Bill Watkins, you have compounded your own idiocy with this post. Everyone knows you were fooled, and now we're laughing at you even more because you're too arrogant and pompous to admit it. My jaw literally dropped open when I read your fake explanation (i.e. LIES). Is your opinion of the public so low that you think we're dumb enough to buy this?

Posted by Iced Tea at April 29, 2009 4:37 PM

Do we need to make a call to Help Me Howard?

Posted by Dave at April 30, 2009 5:04 AM

Christ people, it was a joke, honestly I really think the news station just screwed up, cmon...."So you guys were great, and your gag was very funny. But what I just wrote? Now THAT'S good improv!" That's really just pathetic Just take it like a man and admit you got the story wrong and there will be no hard feelings, the more you keep saying you weren't fooled just makes you look like morons....seriously

Posted by dan at May 3, 2009 4:46 AM

haha you and your news station are a bunch of idiots.. what a joke on journalism

Posted by eLaine at May 17, 2009 6:50 AM

WPIX000213

Fantastic move on improving your credibility Jim!

Hm...

Or are you by any chance a secret agent/spy working for IE against large media corporations (specifically CW11)? If so, Congrats! I'm really proud of your job well done!!

Posted by Isma'll at May 17, 2009 9:05 PM

Looks like I'm not missing anything by not having WPIX on satellite tv.

Posted by G.T. Samatoshi at May 17, 2009 11:37 PM

YOu didn't really believe it was a real funeral - YEAH RIGHT!

I've heard that so many times from people who've bought into stuff that I see your comment for what it is - A LIE!

& I love the way you also cover your crappy reporting that you got busted on with "quite possibly illegal in New York State".

Go back to doing drugs, cause you sure as hell aren't a REAL reporter. :))

Posted by JJ at May 19, 2009 4:37 PM

The killer line of this sage... "But what I just wrote? Now THAT'S good improv!"  
Thanks Jim for truly "getting it".

Life's a comedy people... read between the lines

Posted by laura at May 28, 2009 12:51 PM

What ever your full of bologna and you know it, your POOR reporting and lack of intellegence is the reason you fell for it, and then reporting about it on the news. Seriously you all should be fired and replaced because its obvious you don't do your research like a true reporter should. That video is proof of your failure, and its quite frankly horrifying that you guys didn't do your research. You didn't even contact IE. And then the copy right suit against IE because they posted your video after you posted theirs with out their permission? You guys are hypocrits and don't deserve to be reporting news. Shame on you, you fake reporter, and shame on you tribune seriously...you all are pathetic

Posted by Brian at June 6, 2009 3:18 AM

Uhm, burying an April Fool's Joke in an April Fool's joke? Improv Everywhere never said anything about April Fool's when the video came out. Maybe do some journalism, and not be so sore next time? :]

Posted by Rilight at June 15, 2009 6:15 PM

HAHAHAHA FUNNY....how you try to play it off like you were pranking them instead of admitting "hey, we suck at reporting and decided to be lazy because we're too crappy to actually do proper journalism, and for it we got bitten in the ass"  
Real great. Classy. Just classy.

Posted by Eric at August 2, 2009 9:17 AM

So let me get this straight, you didn't contact Improv Everywhere to confirm if this had really happened. But its their fault you looked like a fool. Sounds like someone needs to take a few refresher courses in journalism.

The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.

Posted by Katran Miller at November 17, 2009 4:46 PM

So, when are you going to contact YouTube and confess that Channel 11 was "just joking" when it had Improv Everywhere's footage of this event TAKEN DOWN from YouTube for violating YOUR copyright, when YOU are the ones that broadcast THEIR footage and put it on YOUR website?

I can't believe Channel 11 had the nerve to CYA itself with a fake copyright violation notice, when it's the one that violated copyright, if anyone did!

**WPIX000214**

Ha ha. Great joke.. VERY funny.

It's several months after April Fool's Day, though. Don't you think it's time to contact YouTube and 'fess up to the prank?

It's scary when the news is the agent of censorship to cover its own butt.

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**WPIX000215**

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[« Best Funeral Ever \(April Fool's 2009\)](#)  
[Best Funeral Ever Outtakes »](#)

## April Fool Funeral

Published on April 2, 2009 in [News](#) 112 Comments



[\(see photo full size\)](#)

If you haven't figured it out by now, [The Best Funeral Ever](#) mission was staged for April Fool's Day. The "family members" were all actors and friends of Improv Everywhere. Next week we will post a new report with photo and video outtakes from the day. We staged a few over-the-top moments that were just too ridiculous to keep the video believable. Our apologizes to those who were fooled into thinking we had lost our minds and done something this horrendous. If you haven't read [the comments](#) yet, do yourself a favor and read a few. They are probably funnier than the hoax itself.

But the hands-down funniest thing about all of this is that tonight's evening news on [CW 11](#) covered this mission as if it actually happened. They think the prank is on the family (our actors) when actually the

**WPIX000216**

April Fool Funeral « Improv Everywhere

<http://improveeverywhere.com/2009/04/02/april-fool-fun>

prank is on them:

So basically the extent of their reporting is watching a video on YouTube and then describing it as fact on air. They didn't bother to email Improv Everywhere for comment, call the cemetery to verify, or try to get a quote from the "family." They just watched the video and threw it on TV. Great journalism!

They featured the story on their website tonight, but then took it down a few hours later (I guess someone filled them in.) Don't worry. I took a screenshot.

Update: The CW filed a copyright claim against us for posting their video of our video!

Check out the hilarious outtakes from this project.

97 Share

38  
tweets

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#### 112 Responses to "April Fool Funeral"

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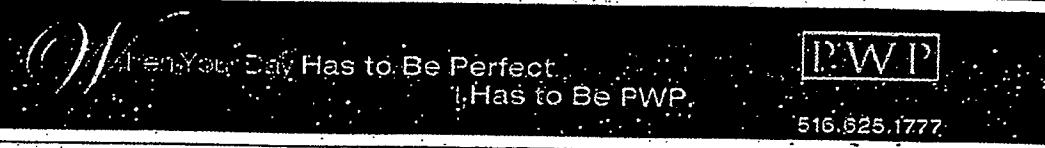
Av

April 2, 2009 at 1:27 am

You rock, Charlie. I figured it out pretty quick, but at the same time it was so believable... it could have really been true.

Keep up the great work!

WPIX000217



When Your Day Has to Be Perfect, It Has to Be PWP.

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# JIM WATKINS

a WPix 11 blog



« The April Fool's Funeral: Who Really Got Punk'd? | Main | Anatomy of A Completely Ridiculous News Story »

Apr 6 8:35pm | April 6, 2009 | comments: 16

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People, people, people! Goodness gracious sakes alive! Many of the people commenting after last week's blog post about the April Fool's Day prank played on us by the street comedy group ImprovEverywhere, didn't quite... how can I say this?... get the joke. We were obviously punk'd, so in the same spirit of April Fool's Day, I completely made up this nonsensical response about how we KNEW it was a prank and ran the story in the newscast anyway. I as much as say in the last sentence of the post that I was teasing!

But.. wow... here's a sample of what commenters had to say, with my responses:

"Poor Jimmy, Just admit you guys were done in and get over it... Stop. You know you were. So were most people just get over it and admit it." - Rayna

But I did admit it.

"You remind me of my 5 year old nephew when he has a prank pulled on him."

"I knew it was a joke, I was just fooling you guys!"

Right. You are almost unbelievably stupid, sir, and I cannot see any valid reason for somebody to be paying you to come up with this insensible droll. Please, for all of us, go find a brick and beat yourself over the head with it." - Alex

What is "insensible droll"?

"To the people who don't understand:

The prank was a JOKE. There was no funeral.

Jim was JOKING when he said that the prank was actually on ImprovEverywhere." - Ted

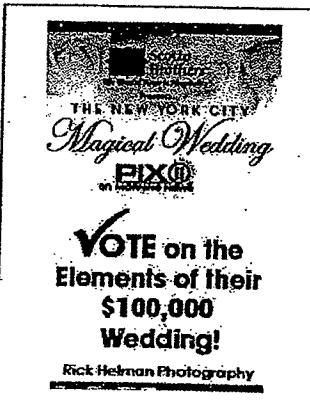
Awesome, Ted, you da man!! Let's hear some more of those!

"Wow, Jim you are truly stupid."

Aw, hell.

"I have a journalism degree, but I've never worked in television. Still, I like to think my reaction to Improv Everywhere wouldn't be to knowingly mislead viewers."

If CW11 didn't know it was a prank, they've done nothing wrong



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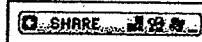
[http://weblogs.wpix.com/news/jimwatkins/2009/04/the\\_april\\_fools.html](http://weblogs.wpix.com/news/jimwatkins/2009/04/the_april_fools.html)

and were simply pulled in by the gag.

But if CW11 knew it was a prank, and reported it as fact, they've done everything wrong and really need to study up on their ethics.

This would be interesting to discuss in a journalism class." - Ryan

Actually, Ryan, I don't believe it would be that interesting. You see, it was a joke, about something not exactly crucial to Western Civilization, and I was just..... ahh, forget it!



## Comments: 16

Posted by Nick at April 7, 2009 12:00 AM

Cmon Jim, you're only getting sucked in. The majority of people know you were just kidding. Don't take these comments in. :P

Posted by Miguel at April 7, 2009 5:22 AM

Hey Jim, next time just do a whoopee cushion on Mr. G. That one never gets old.

Posted by Len Dean at April 7, 2009 9:40 AM

I get that you were jokingly trying to cover your butts.

But what has never been addressed is how a story like that even got on the air. You literally watched a clip on youtube and aired it as news. How much else in a newscast is also based on such shoddy reporting? What safeguards are in place to make sure that doesn't happen again? etc.

In the grand scheme, yes you just got tricked by a silly hoax. But how easily it happened and the joking response has made question your entire news department.

Posted by len dean getoverit\* at April 7, 2009 10:34 AM

Hey Len- do you even know how many stations are fooled on april fools day!!! All over the country. Who cares. Move on with your sad pathetic life.

Posted by Anonymous at April 7, 2009 1:38 PM

P I X = S U C K S

Posted by getoverit from Len Den at April 7, 2009 5:25 PM

"Hey Len- do you even know how many stations are fooled on april fools day!!! "

Very few actually...and the ones that do are usually embarrassed and apologetic. Plus this shows how their methods could lead to them being fooled any day of the year... a few stories a week might be total garbage. A news organization relies on credibility and their's has taken a definite hit. No need for name calling.

Posted by Rayna at April 7, 2009 6:48 PM

Well thank goodness for that... I Was thinking perhaps you would be able to get a great job with fox news...

Posted by LizAnne at April 7, 2009 7:52 PM

I thought the picture was in bad taste. It looked like Jim and Kaity were smiling at a gravesite. I know it was an April Fools thing, but come on now.

Posted by Frederick R. Bedell Jr. at April 7, 2009 8:29 PM

WPIX000219

[http://weblogs.wpix.com/news/jimwatkins/2009/04/the\\_april\\_fools.html](http://weblogs.wpix.com/news/jimwatkins/2009/04/the_april_fools.html)

9/22/2010

Well Jim I guess not everyone has a sense of humor. So to those who took April Fool's picture too seriously let me say this, "Get a life."

Posted by Chris at April 7, 2009 10:32 PM

A death joke is not funny.

Posted by New York's Darkest Voice at April 9, 2009 10:59 AM

Wow, Jimbo, just checkin in & catching up, but you're **STILL** beatin this thing into the Earth? For crissakes, man, give it up to God at this point, **LET IT GO...** we're squirming like invertebrates here, can you say, "AWKWARD?!?!?"

One quick point & I won't even make fun of your alternate lifestyle sports staff:

Why even write this post? Why not use every ounce of your energy to prevent serving the good people of the greater New York area any more large dishes of completely-full-of-poop. Seriously, get your act together over there or just quit & go play with Metallica or whatever it is you're "inner child" is crying out for you to "really" do.

nuh said..

Posted by Lutz at April 9, 2009 2:18 PM

Fail

Posted by Anonymous at April 15, 2009 2:34 PM

"We were obviously punk'd, so in the same spirit of April Fool's Day, I completely made up this nonsensical response about how we KNEW it was a prank and ran the story in the newscast anyway."

If you were doing it in the same spirit of April Fool's Day... why did you post it on the 2nd instead of the 1st?

Posted by a bored NEIGHBOUR.... at April 20, 2009 1:20 AM

I'm just surfing starting from a youtube video to IE's site and then to this news reporters blog... just want to waste some time and end the night with this comment for fun :)

Jim looks like a fruit on his blog banner.

EPIC FAIL!!!!

Anyone up for some WOW or COD4?

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The Streisand Effect » Blog Archive » WPIX falls for April Fools joke... <http://www.thestreisandeffect.com/200904/wpix-falls-for-april-fool/>

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### WPIX falls for April Fools joke and tries to use the DMCA to hide it

April 15, 2009 – 6:45 pm

I hate companies like this and I'm glad that the internet can show everyone how stupid and arrogant they are. *Improv Everywhere* is a group based in New York that does funny improv stunts around the city, such as sending a bunch of people into Best Buy in blue golf shirts, and a 200 person freeze in Grand Central station. It's all pretty funny stuff that is fairly harmless.

Last year, they performed "Best Game Ever", where they made a little league game awesome — showing up with signs, as peanut vendors, etc. Everyone enjoyed it. This year on April 1st they did the "Best Funeral Ever" as a joke. They staged a fake funeral, then pretended to crash it and join the mourners, but made the video look like they were crashing a real funeral. Here's the video:



Lots of people fell for it (and many were quite upset), including CW 11 news (WPIX) who played it on the air as if it really happened. They didn't contact *Improv Everywhere*. They didn't call the cemetery. They didn't try

**WPIX000222**

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to get a quote from the family. Nothing. They played it as a factual story. Here's their news story about it:

*Improv Everywhere* posted a video of the news story on their site, but it was later removed due [a copyright claim](#) from the Tribune, who owns the news station. Not only was this a horrible way to try to hide their mistake (rather than own up to it and apologize), but it simply reeks of hypocrisy. They showed the *Improv Everywhere* video on the air without permission or attribution, then file a DMCA claim to have their video removed from YouTube. As Charlie Todd, the founder of IE, said:

*It's OK for them to air content that we shot and own, but it's not OK for me to upload their footage of the content they took from me? It's "fair use" for the news to take a video off of YouTube and broadcast it, but it's not "fair use" for a citizen to expose their poor reporting on his own content?*

CW 11, nice job hiding the story. Now instead of a handful of people knowing how stupid you are, a whole bunch know.

(via Techdirt)

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1. **2 Responses to “WPIX falls for April Fools joke and tries to use the DMCA to hide it”**
2. Thanks for this information. Great site.

By [Video](#) on Apr 29, 2009

**WPIX000223**

News Show Claims Copyright Infringement To Avoid Embarrassment ...

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Posted by Pile (1500 views) [E-Mail link]

What happens when your April Fool's day prank is taken seriously by a New York television news agency? Well, in an effort to avoid embarrassment, WPIX CW11, owned by Tribune Entertainment, apparently filed a DMCA complaint against the group, "Improv Everywhere" and claimed copyright infringement on their reporting and re-broadcasting of Improv Everywhere's April Fool's gag, that they thought was real. Once again, a news agency does absolutely no fact-checking, and when caught with their pants down tries to pretend the debacle never happened. Luckily someone other than YouTube is hosting the embarrassing video.

Improv Everywhere writes:

*For April Fool's Day we posted a video of a fake mission where it appeared that we had lost our judgment and crashed a funeral. We fooled thousands of angry YouTube users into thinking it was real. The biggest fools of all were the CW 11 news team who reported on the funeral as if it actually happened. They didn't do one bit of research or fact checking, they simply broadcast a YouTube video and reported it as fact (a video from a prank group on April 1st!) I of course uploaded their story to my personal YouTube channel to show the world their lack of journalism skills.*

*Tonight I got a copyright notice from YouTube informing me that Tribune (the parent company of the CW 11) had filed a copyright claim against the video and that it had been removed. Clearly they want this embarrassment off of the Internets. What's more interesting is the fact that their original broadcast used our content without permission. They simply put "YOUTUBE" on the screen to indicate that's where they found the video. So it's OK for them to air content that we shot and own, but it's not OK for me to upload their footage of the content they took from me? It's "fair use" for the news to take a video off of YouTube and broadcast it, but it's not "fair use" for a citizen to expose their poor reporting on his own content?*



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Here's the original premise:

For our latest mission, 30 Improv Everywhere agents found a random funeral in the obituary section of the newspaper and turned it into the best funeral ever. We picked a man who had very few surviving relatives and then showed up to his funeral to make it truly awesome. Enjoy the video first, and then continue reading for photos and our report.

UPDATE: This mission is fake. Everyone involved is an actor. Happy April Fools Day 2009.



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What's even more pathetic is how often this "news team" appears to get their content from YouTube in lieu of actually doing any journalism themselves.

Details

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## CW 11 News v. Improv Everywhere

*TE: The information and commentary contained in this database entry are based on court filings and other informational sources that may contain unproven allegations made by the parties. The truthfulness and accuracy of such information is likely to be in dispute.*

Entered April 20th, 2009 by CMLP Staff

### Summary

**Threat Type:** Correspondence**Date:** 04/2009**Status:** Pending**Location:** New York**Disposition:****Verdict/ Settlement Amount:** n/a**Legal Claims:** Copyright Infringement

After receiving a copyright complaint from the Tribune Company, YouTube took down a video from comedic performance group Improv Everywhere that allegedly infringed copyright in a CW 11 (WPIX-TV) news broadcast. The CW 11 broadcast discussed an Improv... [read full description](#)

### Parties

**Party Issuing Legal Threat:**

CW 11 (WPIX-TV); Tribune Company

**Party Receiving Legal Threat:**

Improv Everywhere

**Type of Party:****Type of Party:**

Organization; Media Company

Organization

**Location of Party:****Location of Party:**

New York

New York

**Legal Counsel:****Legal Counsel:**

### Description

After receiving a copyright complaint from the Tribune Company, YouTube took down a video from comedic performance group Improv Everywhere that allegedly infringed copyright in a CW 11 (WPIX-TV) news broadcast. The CW 11 broadcast discussed an Improv Everywhere prank and reproduced excerpts from one of Improv Everywhere's own videos.

The original Improv Everywhere video showed an April Fools Day prank in which the group crashed a staged funeral. CW 11 broadcast a news story about the video under the assumption that the video was a prank on unsuspecting funeral-goers. In reality, Improv's prank was on any viewer who believed the video to be real. Improv Everywhere has a detailed post on the takedown.

### Related Links:

- [BoingBoing: CW-11 news claims clip of them airing YouTube prank infringes copyright](#)
- [Improv Everywhere: CW 11 Files Copyright Claim](#)
- [MetaCafe: CW 11 News Falls for Fake Improv Everywhere April Fool's Mission \(clip of CW 11 broadcast\)](#)
- [Improv Everywhere: April Fool Funeral](#)
- [YouTube: CW 11 Falls for Fake Improv Everywhere April Fool's Mission \(content removed\)](#)
- [Legal Satyricon: Whatever happened to playing fair?](#)

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- [DeRosa v. Rattani](#) 3 days 22 hours ago
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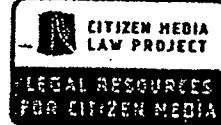
Username: \*

WPIX000227

CW 111News v. Improv Everywhere | Citizen Media Law Project

<http://www.citmedialaw.org/threats/cw-111-news-v-improv-everyw>**Details****Website(s) Involved:**  
[YouTube.com](http://YouTube.com)**Content Type(s):**  
Video**Publication Medium:**  
Website**Subject Area(s):**  
Copyright  
DMCA  
Fair UsePassword: [Log in](#)

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now are facing criminal charges for health code violations.)

This is territory Todd does his best to avoid. He is still not entirely comfortable with how far Improv Everywhere pushed the boundaries of human kindness when, in 2004, he came up with the "Best Gig Ever" caper, wherein he called on his growing militia of agents to memorize the lyrics to a randomly selected band's songs, make T-shirts with their name on them, and descend upon their Sunday-night gig. Thirty-five die-hard Ghost of Pasha "fans" turned out to give the no-name band the gig of their dreams. When the band was tipped off to the prank, they were a little bummed out.

That prank came close to breaking with the spirit of IE's missions: causing an authentic scene that gives people an excuse to break out of their ordinary daily routines. This philosophy was put to the test this spring, when IE staged a mission titled "Best Funeral Ever." A variation on "Best Gig Ever," the prank saw Todd and 30 other agents crash the burial of a recently deceased New Yorker. The goal, Todd stated, was to give the dearly departed and his loved ones the awesomest funeral imaginable, but the response was unlike anything Improv Everywhere had seen before. As soon as the video was posted, it was clear from the comments that Todd and company had finally gone too far: "You guys have done some great pranks, but this is just plain fucked-up." "I am ashamed to think that I was actually a fan of yours." "This prank is sick." That night the local WPIX newscast ran a segment on the mission, asking, "Did one local improv group go too far?"

What all of these offended observers failed to notice was the date: April 1. There was no funeral, no mourning family. They were all agents,



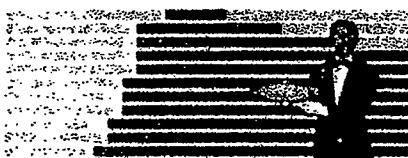
Nearly 2,500 people in 10 cities worldwide took part in this year's No Pants Subway Ride.

and the joke was on all of us. Given the date, the whole ruse should have been obvious, but in a follow-up posted April 2, Todd apologized to anyone "fooled into thinking we had lost our minds and done something this horrendous."

For Todd, whose extravagantly titled book, *Cousin a Scene: Extraordinary Pranks in Ordinary Places With Improv Everywhere*, hits shelves this month, the art of the prank, and the motivation behind it, is pretty simple. When he gives lectures at college campuses around the country these days—last September he taught a seminar in Russia—students always hunger for the counterculture message behind his work. "They're like, 'Why? Why? Why?' And they have a hard time accepting the answer: 'It's really fuckin' fun.'"

## Pranks Across America

From coast to coast, slap-happy groups are putting one over on us.



**The Newsbreakers**  
newsbreakers.org  
HQ: Rochester, NY  
Best bit: "Hijacking Live News Broadcasts." They follow news trucks and then jump around in the background dressed like tigers.

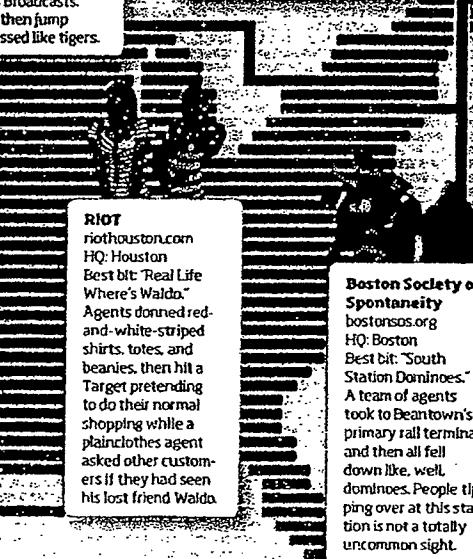
**Guerilla Improv** guerillaimprov.com  
HQ: Los Angeles  
Best bit: "The Strand Race." A finish line, a cheering crowd, water tables, and a media crew were set up in the middle of a jogging path, unbeknownst to the fitness-crazed SoCal joggers just looking for a little exercise.

**Scene Diego**  
scenediego.org  
HQ: San Diego  
Best bit: "Rocky." A determined agent runs through the mall in gray sweat. Then another, then another. Will they catch the chicken? "Adrian"

**The Yes Men**  
theyesmen.org  
HQ: USA  
Best bit: "The Fake New York Times." Distributed 1.2 million copies of a mocked-up NYT cover announcing the end of the Iraq War. Dick Cheney did not think this was funny.



**Zug**  
zug.com  
HQ: Boston  
Best bit: "Senators' Favorite Jokes." An adult posing as a fifth grader sent U.S. senators handwritten letters looking for help with a research project on his favorite jokes. Many responded, some with very bad jokes.



**RIOT**  
riotouston.com  
HQ: Houston  
Best bit: "Real Life Where's Waldo." Agents donned red-and-white-striped shirts, totes, and beanies, then hit a Target pretending to do their normal shopping while a plainclothes agent asked other customers if they had seen his lost friend Waldo.

**Boston Society of Spontaneity**  
bostonssos.org  
HQ: Boston  
Best bit: "South Station Dominos." A team of agents took to Beantown's primary rail terminal and then all fell down like, well, dominos. People tipping over at this station is not a totally uncommon sight.